OSSAN IDOL
06
ICHIKA KINO &
MOCHIKO MOCHIDA
TOKYOPOP

Ossan Idol, Volume 6

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OSSAN IDOL 06

MANGA ♦ ICHIKA KINO
ORIGINAL STORY ♦
MOCHIKO MOCHIDA
CHARACTER DESIGN ♦
MIZUKI SAKAKIBARA

STORY

MIROKU, A 270 LB UNEMPLOYED SHUT-IN WAS SPURRED ON BY THE POPULARITY OF HIS "LET'S TRY DANCING" VIDEO, JOINED A GYM, GOT IN SHAPE, AND TRANSFORMED INTO A MIDDLE-AGED HUNK IN NO TIME! ALONG WITH YOICHI AND SHIJU, HE CAUGHT THE EYE OF A FAMOUS PRODUCER, MR. LAVENDER, AND THE THREE MEN SUCCESSFULLY DEBUTED AS MIYOSHI! LATELY THEY'VE HAD MORE AND MORE GIGS WITH THE SUPER-POPULAR IDOL GROUP TENKA...

CHARACTERS

MIROKU (36)

UNEMPLOYED. SHUT-IN. VIRGIN INTERNET ADDICT. WEIGHS 270 LBS. GIVES OFF PHEROMONES UNCONSCIOUSLY

MIROKU OSAKI

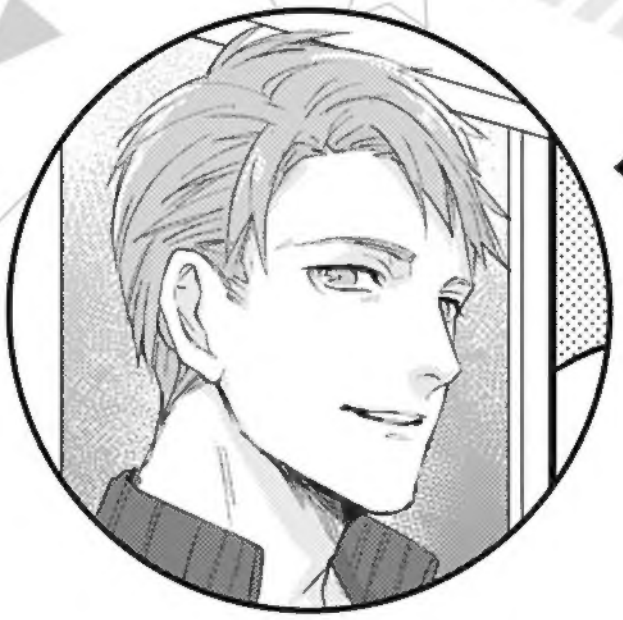
HE PRESSED "UPLOAD" BY MISTAKE AND HIS "LET'S DANCE" VIDEO WENT VIRAL!

FUMI'S HERO, THE MAN WHO SAVED HER FROM A TROUBLESOME CUSTOMER, WAS ACTUALLY MIROKU BACK WHEN HE WAS CHUBBY!

FUMI

FUMI KISARAGI

YOICHI'S BUBBLY NIECE WHO WORKS AT HIS OFFICE. SHE ALWAYS PUTS HER ALL INTO HER WORK.



YOICHI (41)

YOICHI KISARAGI

HE WAS OVER 300 LBS, BUT NOW YOICHI IS THE CEO OF A SMALL ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY. HE AND MIROKU MET AT THE GYM. USED TO BE AN IDOL FOR THE SHINEEZ TALENT AGENCY.

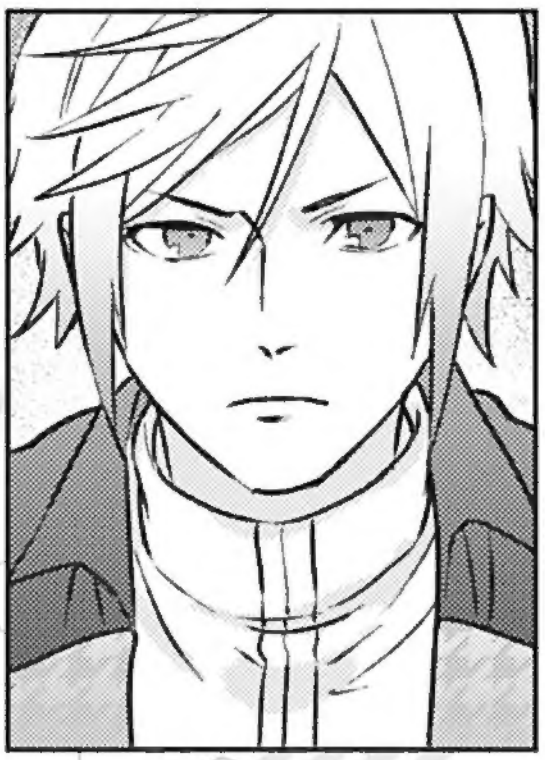
SHIJU (40)

SHIJU ONOHARA

A FORMER DANCER AND HOST, NOW UNEMPLOYED AND LEADING A LIFE ON THE EDGE. HE WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED THAT MIROKU TAKE PART IN THE DANCE COMPETITION, AND HE USED TO BELONG TO A LEGENDARY DANCE TEAM.

TENKA

SUPER POPULAR IDOLS IN THEIR TEENS THAT BELONG TO SHINEEZ, A MAJOR TALENT AGENCY.



KIRA

THE ULTIMATE PRINCE OF THE IDOL INDUSTRY. HE USED TO VIEW MIROKU AS AN ENEMY, BUT...?

ROU

HE LOOKS CUTE BUT IS SURPRISINGLY LEVELHEADED.

ZOU

DESPITE HIS COOL AND COLLECTED AURA, HE'S ACTUALLY AN IDIOT.

OSSAN IDOL

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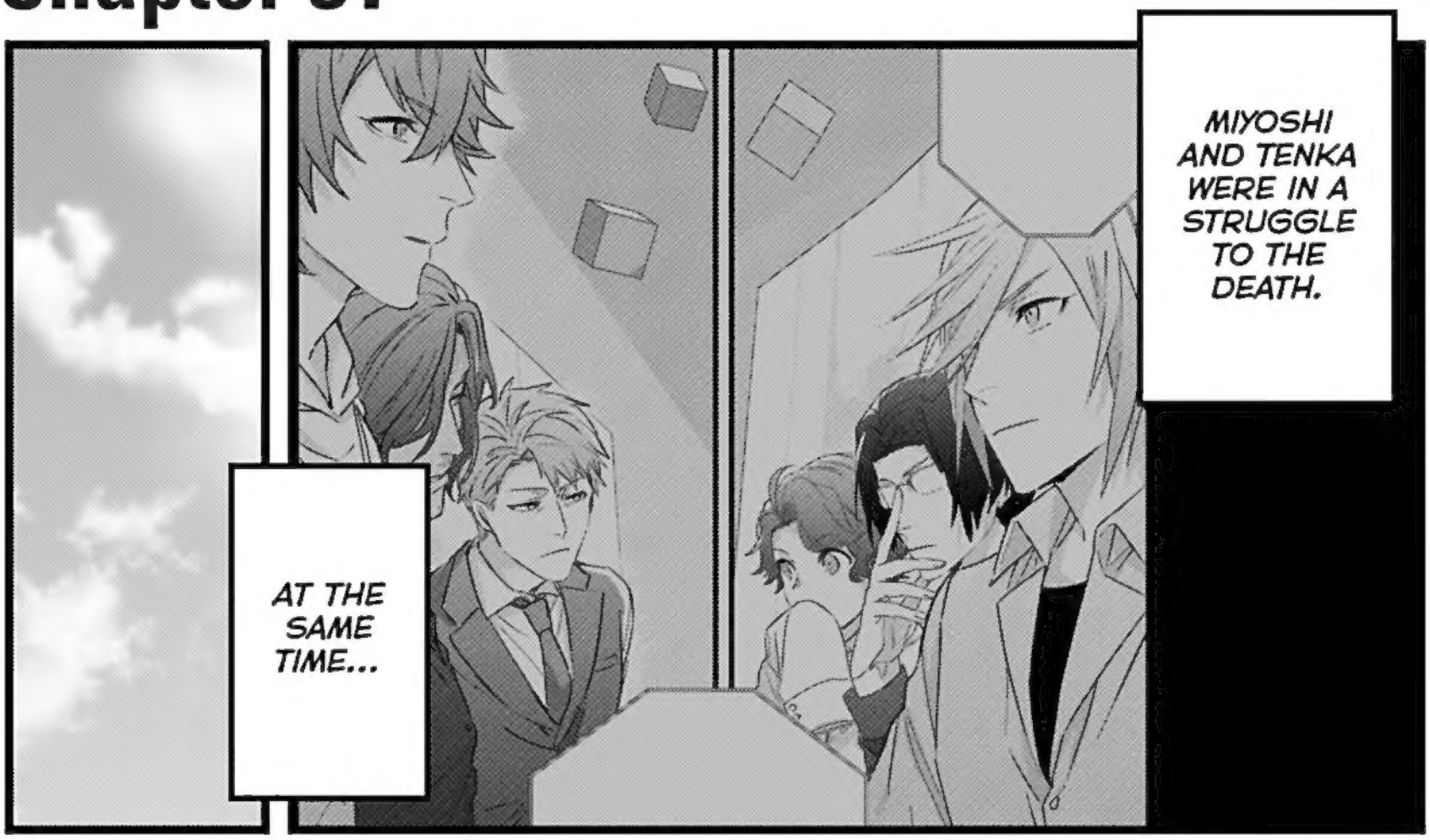
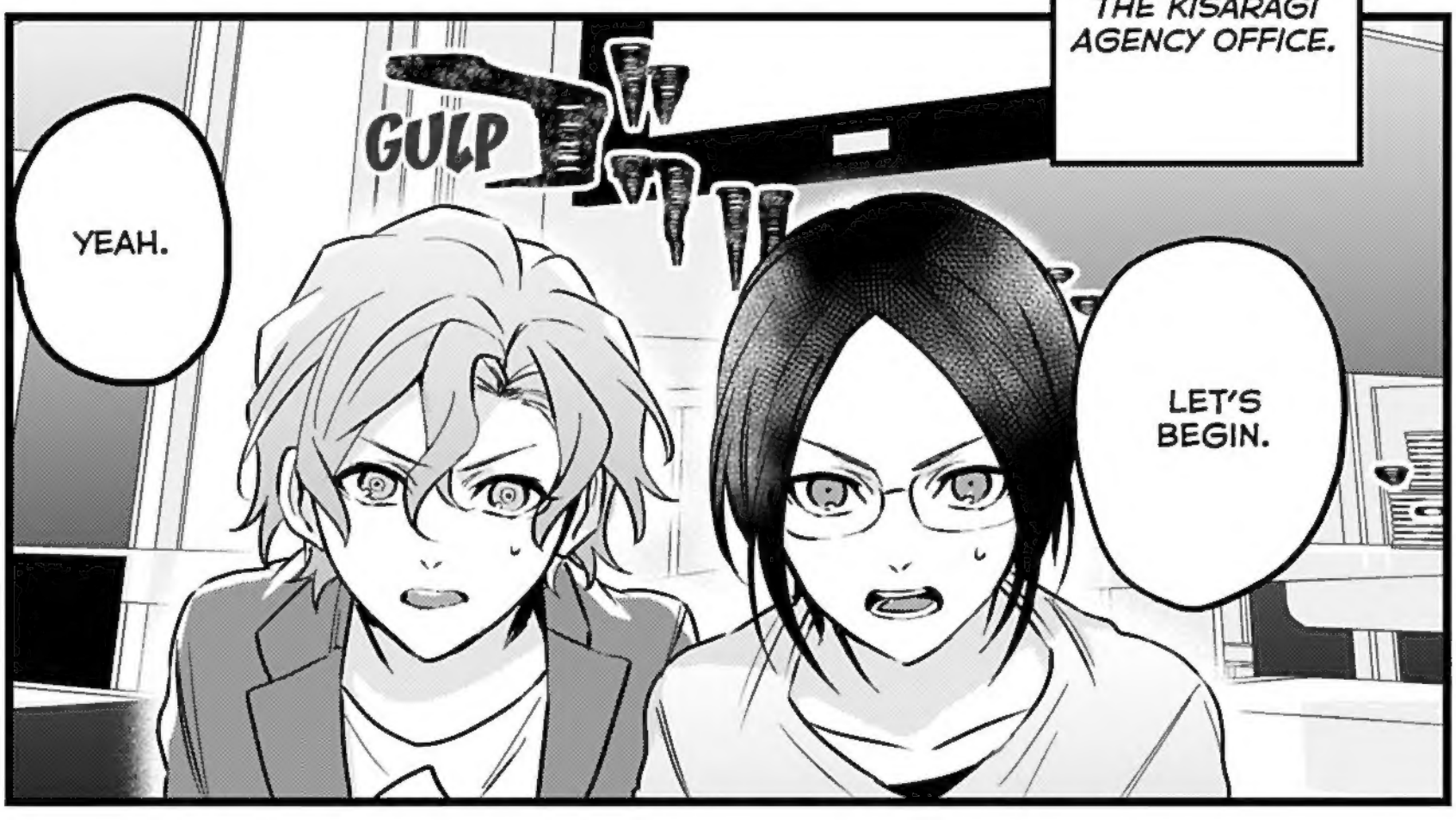
Chapter 31


MIYOSHI AND TENKA WERE IN A STRUGGLE TO THE DEATH.
AT THE SAME TIME...

THERE WAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF STRUGGLE GOING ON IN THE KISARAGI AGENCY OFFICE.


GULP
YEAH.
LET'S BEGIN.

ANOTHER TYPE OF BATTLE WAS BEGINNING.

CLICK

LET'S GO BACK IN TIME BY AN HOUR.

"WELCOME TO THE KISARAGI AGENCY! (DEMO VERSION)"...?

WHAT IS THIS?

I THOUGHT WE COULD PUT IT ON OUR WEBSITE FOR SOME PR.

WE MADE IT TOGETHER.

I SEE...

IT'S A ROMANTIC OTOME GAME WHERE YOU, FUMI, ARE THE MAIN CHARACTER AND YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH THE MIYOSHI MEMBERS. WE WANT YOU TO PLAY IT AND GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS.

I NEVER HEARD ABOUT ANY OF THIS!

FUMI, DO YOU HAVE ANY GIRL FRIENDS WHO LIKE TO GAME?

THAT'S NO GOOD. ON TOP OF BEING THE GAME'S CREATORS, WE'RE BOTH GUYS, SO IT'S HARD TO VIEW THE GAME OBJECTIVELY.

I'VE NEVER PLAYED OTOME GAMES BEFORE THOUGH...

SERIOUSLY?!

AH!

FRIENDS WHO KNOW MIYOSHI AND LIKE TO GAME, HUH?

I SEE...

SO THAT'S WHY YOU CALLED ME OVER.

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!

HOW COULD I *NOT* PLAY A GAME THAT FEATURES MIYOSHI?

GREAT!

BAM

THANK YOU, MAKI!

HEH HEH!

FWAP

THEN LET'S GET RIGHT TO IT!

GULP

WHIRRR

WELCOME TO THE KISARAGI AGENCY!

(DEMO VERSION)

NEW GAME

CONTINUE

CLICK

CLICK

FLASH

WHOA, IT'S YOU!

I'M FUMI!
TODAY, I'LL BE STARTING MY NEW JOB AT THE KISARAGI AGENCY, WHICH EMPLOYS MANY MODELS AND IDOLS.

OH, SOME-ONE ELSE APPEARED!

!

WE WERE GOING FOR A SUPER REALISTIC LOOK!

THE MAIN CHARACTER'S APPEARANCE IN OTOME GAMES IS REALLY IMPORTANT. IS IT REALLY OKAY FOR THIS CHARACTER TO LOOK EXACTLY LIKE FUMI?

YOU SHOULD HAVE STUDIED THE RIGHT OF PUBLICITY FIRST...

HE LOOKS SO SLEAZY...

WHAT'S UP, CUTIE? ARE YOU LOST?

IT'S GUYS LIKE THESE WHO ARE SECRETLY HARBORING DARK PASTS, SO WE SET HIS DIFFICULTY TO "HIGH."

IS THAT HOW YOU SEE HIM?

WE JUST STARTED AND HE'S ALREADY SUPER FRIENDLY!

SEEING HIM DEPICTED LIKE THIS REMINDS ME THAT HE USED TO BE A HOST.

I'M ALREADY EMBARRASSED...

"SORRY. I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AROUND BEFORE AND YOU'RE SUPER CUTE, SO I COULDN'T HELP BUT STOP TO CHAT."

UM...

LET'S JUST MOVE ON, MAKI.

HE'S PRETTY MUCH SLEAZINESS PERSONIFIED.

I'M LUCKY TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ONE TO MEET YOU... IF YOU DON'T MIND, CAN I HAVE YOUR NUMBER?

"I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND, MISS."

"ARE YOU THE NEWBIE?"

IT'S...

AH...

MY UNCLE...!

WAIT, SOME-ONE ELSE APPEA-RED!

CAN WE STOP? I DON'T WANT TO SEE PEOPLE I KNOW ACTING LIKE THIS!

ARE YOU OKAY?

SINCE FUMI'S NOT USED TO THEM, THIS SORT OF OTOME GAME MIGHT HAVE BEEN A BIT MUCH FOR HER...

WHAT A RELIEF. HE'S STILL JUST MY UNCLE AND NOT A POTENTIAL LOVE INTEREST.

TALK ABOUT AN UNEXPECTED BETRAYAL!

SHE'S OUR DARLING MANAGER, SO WE HAVE TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF HER...

YOU'RE NOT RELATED IN THE GAME, SO HE'S AVAILABLE AS A LOVE INTEREST!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

WH-WHY MY UNCLE...?!

I WHOLLY AGREE...

WHY DO I HAVE TO LISTEN TO MY UNCLE FLIRTING WITH ME?

HUH?

UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, FUMI, THERE'S ONE LAST BOSS YOU HAVE YET TO MEET...

PRINCE MIROKU?!

HEY, YOU TWO!

CLATTER

THE PRINCE IS IN THE GAME TOO?!

OF COURSE HE IS.

...!

WAH!

YOUR FACE IS RED.
DO YOU HAVE A FEVER?

WAIT, THAT'S NOT IT. IT LOOKED SO REAL THAT I FELT EMBARRASSED...

UM... HE WAS SO DIFFERENT THAT IT MADE ME FEEL AWKWARD!

THIS IS ENOUGH, ISN'T IT?!

STOP! STOP!

FWAP

N-NO!

SMIRK

SMIRK

FUMI, AREN'T YOU JUST JEALOUS THAT OTHER GIRLS WILL GET TO ENJOY MIROKU HITTING ON THEM?

CLICK

HUH?

POINT

ACTUALLY, THERE ARE MORE CLIPS.

I'M GLAD YOU CAME.

IS YOICHI THE MAN YOU LOVE? OR IS IT SHIJU?

THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE EITHER OF THEM...

WOULD YOU CHOOSE ME?

I'LL LOVE YOU SO MUCH THAT...

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BREATHE WITHOUT ME.

THAT'S THE CLIP.

HE FILMED IT FOR US.

DON'T YOU REALIZE YOU'D BE MURDERING FANS?

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT.

I'M GOING TO POST THIS ONLI—

NO!

ABSOLUTELY NOT!

THE RESULT OF THE FIGHTS THAT FOLLOWED LED TO MIYOSHI'S OTOME GAME...

BEING SHELVED WITHOUT THEM EVEN KNOWING ABOUT IT.

WHY ARE YOU YELLING AT ME?!

WE HAVE TO PROTECT THE FANS' LIVES!

Chapter 32

CLACK

CLACK

CLACK

Dear June

SO SHE'S BACK IN JAPAN...

BUT THINGS'LL BE EVEN MORE TROUBLE-SOME IF I DON'T AGREE TO MEET WITH HER.

UGH, I WANT TO GO HOME.

RUFFLE

RUFFLE

DANCE STUDIO MOON

JUNE!

LONG TIME NO SEE!

...YOU LOOK GOOD.

I'M SURPRISED YOU KNEW WHERE TO FIND ME.

I DIDN'T.

BUT I SAW YOUR COMMERCIALS AND INSTANTLY KNEW...

THAT IT WAS YOU, JUNE.

STOP CALLING ME THAT.

CLACK

CLACK

WHAT DO YOU WANT AFTER ALL THIS TIME?

THAT'S NOT HOW YOU SHOULD TALK TO AN EX-GIRLFRIEND.

IN THE PAST, YOU WERE–

CUT IT OUT.

IF YOU CAME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST, JUST LEAVE.

IT SEEMS LIKE... ...

LIKE WHAT?

!

I CAN TELL BY WATCHING YOU.

LIKE YOU CONTINUED DANCING.

YOU...

I WAS WORRIED WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU BECAME A HOST AFTER I WENT OVERSEAS...

BUT IT SEEMED LIKE YOU WERE STILL DANCING THE ENTIRE TIME.

DON'T LOOK SO MAD!

I HAVE A GREAT OFFER FOR YOU.

LET'S PAIR UP AGAIN.

I KNOW WE COULD REACH NEW HEIGHTS TOGETHER.

YOU KNOW IT TOO, DON'T YOU?

HUH?

THAT YOU HAVE NOTHING BUT YOUR DANCING SKILLS.

ARE YOU GOING TO START THINGS AGAIN ONLY TO END THEM?
I KNOW WE'LL DO BETTER AND BECOME SUCCESSES THIS TIME!
DON'T BE MEAN. I WAS YOUNG BACK THEN.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!

WITHOUT ME, YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE DECIDED ON ANYTHING!

"WE"? YOU WERE ONLY EVER SELFISHLY FOCUSED ON YOURSELF BEFORE.

DID YOU JUST CALL ME SELFISH?

BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BY YOURSELF.

JUNE, YOU ALWAYS RELIED ON ME...

YOU BLAMED OTHERS...

AND RAN AWAY FROM YOUR RESPONSI-BILITIES.

STOP BEING A SILLY IDOL...

AND JOIN ME—

SHIJU?

SO I'LL MAKE THIS DECISION FOR YOU TOO.

STARE

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

DID YOU FORGET YOUR PROMISE TO ME?

HUH?

WAIT!

JUST PLAY ALONG.

WHISPER

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

AS YOUR EX-GIRLFRIEND, IT IS!

JUNE, WHO IS THIS GIRL?!

...AND IF WE ARE?

DON'T TELL ME YOU TWO ARE DATING.

A SH-SHORTIE?!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. SHE'S SUCH A SHORTIE!

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOU HAD A THING FOR CHILDISH WOMEN, JUNE.

HEY! THERE'S NO NEED TO INSULT NINA.

ALTHOUGH I REALIZE IT'S EASY FOR THEM TO FALL FOR YOU.

OH?

BUT WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE OLDER TO PLAY GAMES IN LOVE...

I SUPPOSE IT WOULD MAKE SENSE FOR YOU TWO TO BE DATING...

KIDDO. ♡

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU CALLING "KIDDO"?!

I'MMA TELL YOU SOMETHING, SO LISTEN UP!

WH...

SNAP

GOT IT?!

I AM SHIJU'S GIRLFRIEND!

I WANT TO DIE...

I DEFINITELY WANT SOMETHING STRONG.

HEY, CAN SHE GET SOMETHING SWEET?

AND NOT TOO STRONG.

I KNOW I GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT, BUT WHY'D I HAVE TO SAY THAT?

JUST CALM DOWN.

I DO, BUT...

SORRY, DO YOU NOT LIKE SWEET STUFF?

IT'S FINE. I'M THE ONE WHO STUCK MY NOSE INTO THINGS.

SORRY YOU GOT CAUGHT UP IN IT.

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT, AFTER ALL.

GOOD.

YOU THINK SO?

SHIJU...

YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY CONSIDERATE.

I CAN SEE WHY YOU WERE A HOST.

HEY NOW.

I CAN SEE THAT TOO...

WELL, I JUST FILLED IN WHEN THE CLUB NEEDED SOMEONE.

THAT'S DEFINITELY A LIE.

THEN LET'S JUST SAY I CONTINUED DANCING BECAUSE I WAS POPULAR.

I HEARD EVERY-THING.

HEY, WHY DIDN'T YOU QUIT DANCING?

YOU WERE ALSO WORKING AS A HOST, RIGHT?

THAT'S WHY I THINK YOU'RE LYING.

YOU LOOK THE MOST SERIOUS WHEN YOU'RE DANCING. IT'S LIKE IT MAKES YOU COME TO LIFE.

I THINK...

IT'S BECAUSE DANCE IS ALL I HAVE.

HUH?

ARGH...

THAT'S WHY I PICKED THINGS UP QUICKLY WHEN I JOINED THE DANCE TEAM IN HIGH SCHOOL.

I WAS FORCED TO TAKE BALL-ROOM DANCING LESSONS WHEN I WAS LITTLE.

ALTHOUGH IT WASN'T TRULY PRIDE, EITHER.

I PREFER PRIDE OVER FALSE MODESTY.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAVE LOTS OF PRIDE.

BUT...

I NEVER PUT ONE HUNDRED PERCENT OF MY EFFORT INTO ANYTHING.

BUT YOU WERE ON AN AMAZING DANCE TEAM, RIGHT?

IT'S JUST THAT DANCE WAS THE ONLY THING I ACTUALLY STUCK WITH EVEN THOUGH I WASN'T TALENTED AT IT.

YOICHI SAID YOU WERE A BACKUP DANCER FOR ALPHA TOO.

I LOST INTEREST QUICKLY WHEN I COULD DO THINGS BUT WASN'T PARTICULARLY TALENTED AT THEM.

THEN WHY DID YOU BREAK UP?

YEAH...

IT'S TRUE THAT WE WERE AN AMAZING GROUP.

AS A PROFES-SIONAL DANCE TEAM.

WE WERE ALL SET TO HAVE OUR MAJOR DEBUT...

BUT ONE OF OUR MEMBERS WAS SCOUTED RIGHT BEFORE OUR DEBUT AND WENT OVERSEAS.

Good Bye

WE WERE UNABLE TO DEBUT...

AND NATURALLY GREW APART.

DON'T TELL ME THAT MEMBER WAS...

YEAH. IT WAS HANAYO, THE WOMAN FROM EARLIER.

SHE WAS THE LEADER OF THE DANCE TEAM AND MY EX-GIRLFRIEND.

LET'S DO IT, SHIJU.

HUH? DO WHAT?

I WANTED TO HURRY AND FORGET EVERY-THING THAT HAPPENED...

SO OF COURSE SHE HAD TO SHOW UP AGAIN HERE IN JAPAN.

...

GO ON A DATE.

WHAT?! A DATE?!

JUST WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?!

I'LL PRETEND TO BE YOUR GIRLFRIEND...

SO THAT WOMAN WILL GIVE UP ON YOU!

STAAARE

...

...

STAAARE

WHISPER
ひそ…

WHISPER
ひそ

INHALE

I...

I'LL ADMIT THAT YOU HAVE GUTS.

NINA'S WEIRDLY FIRED UP?!

NOT JUST ANYONE WOULD BE FINE TAGGING ALONG WITH A COUPLE ON A DATE.

THIS IS SO AWKWARD!

EX

(FAKE) GIRLFRIEND

SHE ALREADY SUSPECTS US!

IF THIS IS A *REAL* DATE, I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE. ♡

WH-WHAT?

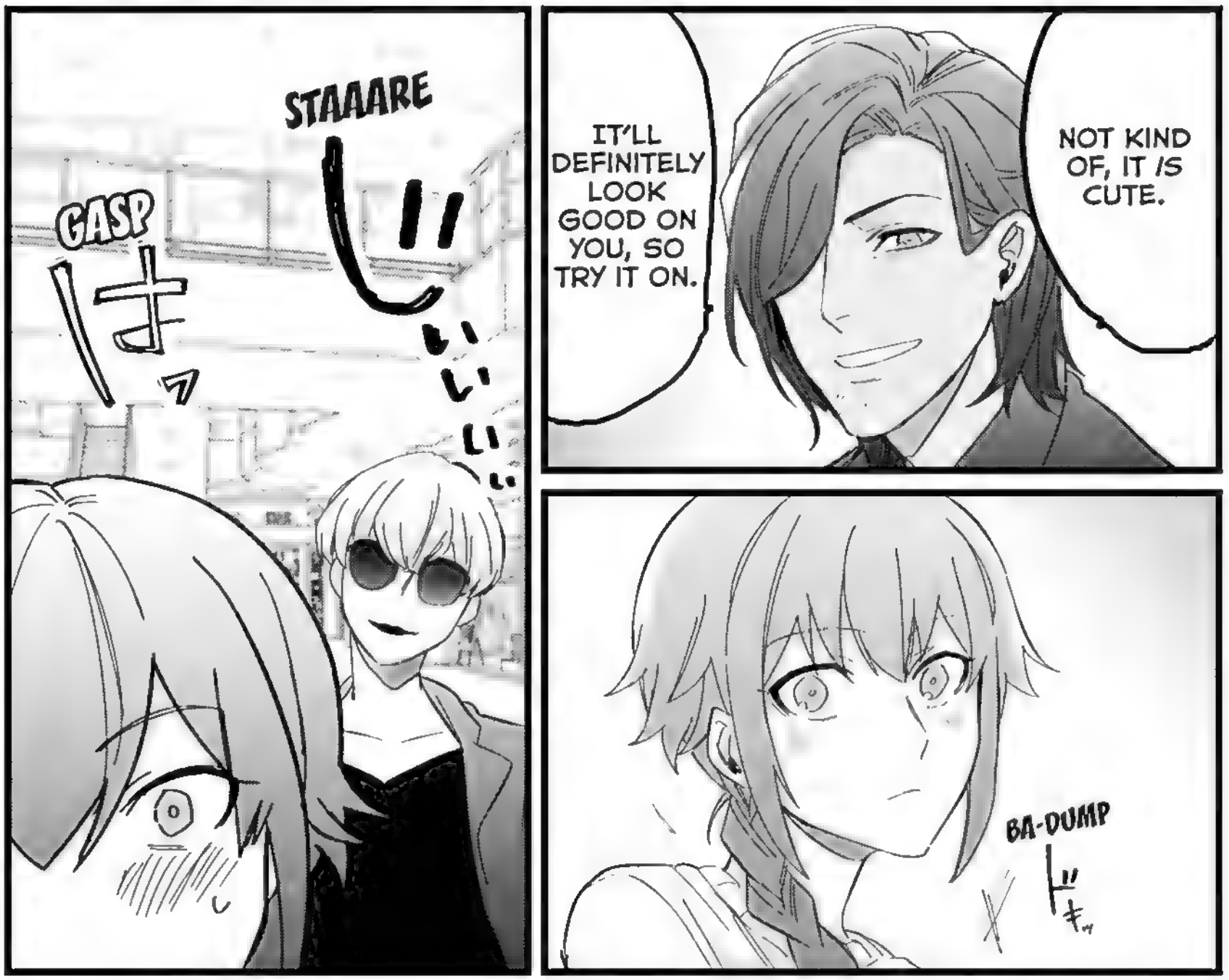
HOW CUTE OF YOU, TRYING TO DISCOURAGE ME.

HUH? OH, RIGHT!

WE NEED TO DO SOME-THING...

UHHH... LET'S START BY LOOKING AT CLOTHES, LIKE ALWAYS!

IT'S CUTE... KIND OF.
HEY, DON'T YOU THINK THIS WOULD LOOK GOOD ON YOU?


STAAARE
GASP
IT'LL DEFINITELY LOOK GOOD ON YOU, SO TRY IT ON.
NOT KIND OF, IT IS CUTE.
BA-DUMP

REALLY?

I HONESTLY THINK IT'D SUIT YOU...

I-IT'S TOO CUTE FOR ME, SO NO THANKS!

SMIRK

MAYBE NEXT TIME THEN...

WHEN WE'RE ALONE.

I SEE...

...IF WE REMEMBER.

130° FWIP

...

LET'S SEE...

I DON'T CARE IF YOU THINK I'M CUTE OR NOT!

JUST GIVE IN. IT'LL BE CUTE...

BEFORE THAT, MAY I HAVE A WORD?

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU TWO WANNA EAT?

YEAH.

WANT TO GET A BITE TO EAT?

WH-WHY DO YOU ASK THAT?

ARE YOU TWO ACTUALLY DATING?

YOUR NAME IS NINA, RIGHT?

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TWO THAT'S A LITTLE OFF.

!!

FLINCH

WHAT'S SHIJU'S FAVORITE FOOD?

OR HIS FAVORITE SONG?

AS HIS GIRLFRIEND, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MUCH.

!!

UM...

TH-THAT'S...

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED IT, NINA.

I'M SURE...

YOU'RE JUST PRETEND-ING.

...I KNEW IT.

IT'S FINE, NINA.

THAT'S-

IN THE END, YOU STILL HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL...

I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU EVER SUGGESTING IT ON YOUR OWN, JUNE.

HEY, JUNE.

クスッ

CHUCKLE

I'LL GUIDE YOU WHEN YOU'RE UNABLE TO MAKE A SINGLE DECISION FOR YOURSELF.

I KNOW WE'LL BE GREAT PARTNERS.

I AIN'T ASKING YOU TO DO THAT.

HANAYO…

REACH!

EXCUSE ME?

…

I EVEN TRIED TO USE YOU AS AN EXCUSE TO DISTANCE MYSELF FROM DANCE AT ONE POINT.

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ME NOT BEING ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS AND HATING RESPONSIBILITY WAS ALL TRUE.

I THOUGHT THAT TOO.

BUT YOU WERE WRONG.

THEN–

THE OTHER DAY, YOU SAID THAT DANCE WAS ALL I HAD.

BUT DANCING WAS THE ONE THING...

I COULDN'T QUIT.

I CONTINUED DANCING...

BECAUSE I WANTED TO DANCE WITH MY FRIENDS.

WHEN I JOINED MIYOSHI, I CHANGED FROM BEING A GUY WHO COULD *ONLY* DANCE TO BEING A GUY WHO COULD *ALSO* DANCE.

SO THIS TIME, I'M GOING TO DECIDE FOR MYSELF.

I CHOOSE THEM.

I SEE...

YOU'RE SERIOUS, HUH?

TRY NOT TO GET SICK OF THOSE FRIENDS OF YOURS.

THIS IS NO FUN, SO I'M LEAVING.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME THAT.

I WONDER WHERE MY CUTE JUNE FROM BEFORE WENT.

HOW BORING.

HAAAH...

MUMBLE

...

GOOD LUCK.

CHEER

GREAT! I CAN STAY AN IDOL!

CONGRATS, SHIJU!

LEFT?

SHE...

O...

OKAY.

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

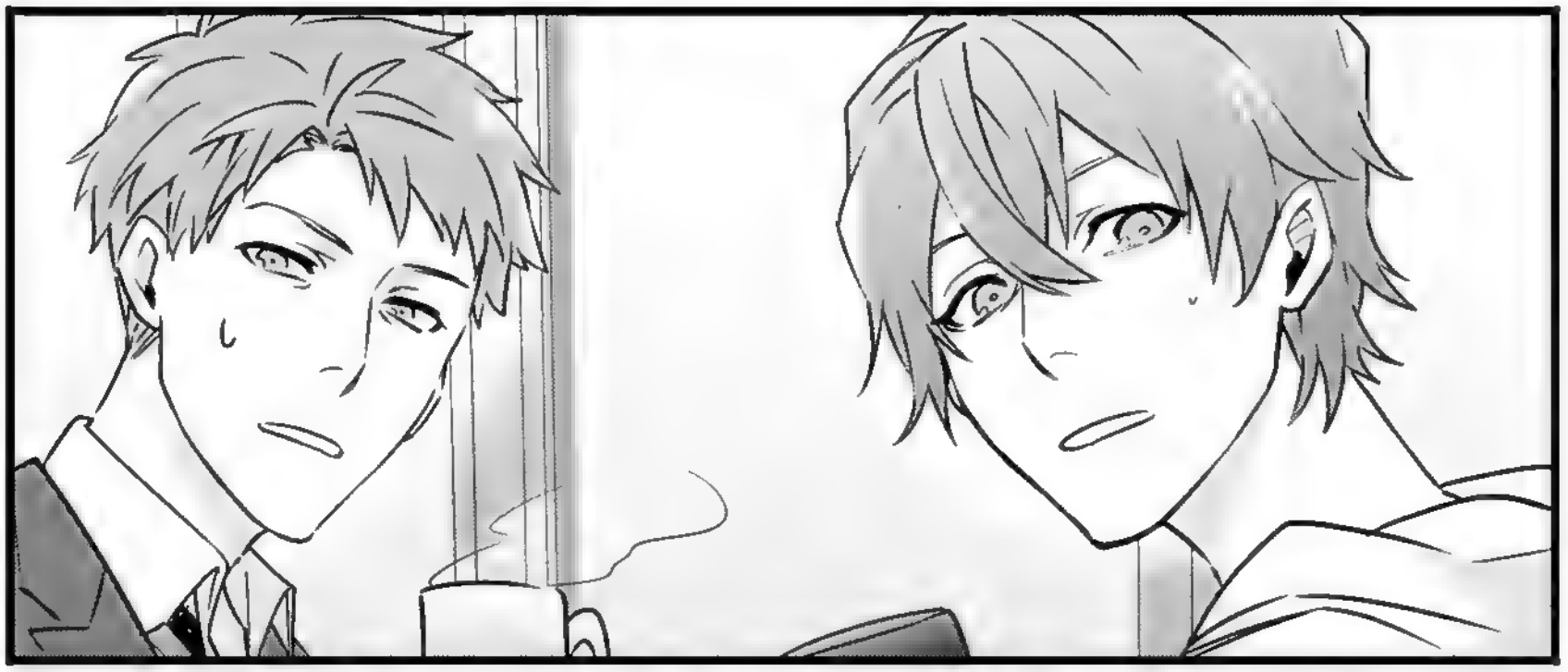
I'LL TREAT YOU TO A MEAL LATER AS THANKS.

Y-YE-AH.

FWAP

W-WELL, I GUESS I'M DONE PRETENDING TO BE YOUR GIRLFRIEND.

Chapter 33



FORGIVE ME.
MIROKU...

I KNOW! MY MOM GAVE ME SOME APPLES TO SHARE WITH YOU GUYS.
MAYBE YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER EATING ONE!
TA-DA!
YOU SEEM REALLY DOWN...
WHAT'S UP, SHIJU?
...

WELL, I WAS ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM...

THANKS, YOU TWO.

I'LL LISTEN IF YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT!

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO GET THIS DEPRESSED, SHIJU.

WHAT? ARE YOU OKAY?!

ACTUALLY, I HAD A BIT OF TROUBLE WITH AN EX...

PARDON?

CRUSH

BY GOING ON A DATE WITH NINA.

← THE APPLE

HOW DID THINGS END UP THAT WAY?

UM...

OUR PLAN WAS TO HAVE HER PRETEND TO BE MY GIRL-FRIEND SO MY EX WOULD GIVE UP ON ME.

HANG ON HANG ON HANG ON!!!

A DATE? WITH NINA? ARE YOU TRYING TO SEDUCE MY SISTER?

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

IT'S NOT?

NO, THAT'S NOT IT!

I SEE. AND THEN YOU FELL FOR NINA...

YEAH...

WIPE

WIPE

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU?

YET YOU DIDN'T FALL FOR HER, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S SO CUTE?

I FORGOT HOW MUCH OF A SISTER COMPLEX YOU HAVE.

BUT YOU WENT ON A DATE, RIGHT? TO LOOK AT CLOTHES AND HAVE A BITE TO EAT?

THIS...

WELL, THAT MUCH IS TRUE.

AND THAT...

I'LL GO TOO.

I HOUGHT IT BE ST TO SK-

IN ANY CASE, SHE REALLY HELPED ME OUT, SO I WANT TO THANK HER BY TREATING HER TO A MEAL.

THAT WAS FAST.

THAT'S TRUE.

I KNEW THINGS WOULD BLOW UP IF HE FOUND OUT THAT I'D GONE OUT WITH NINA...

SO YOU WEREN'T DEPRESSED, YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT TELLING HIM?

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU TWO WHISPERING ABOUT?!

ヒソ…
WHISPER

WHISPER
ヒソ…

YOICHI...

I DON'T WANT TO GET IN BETWEEN YOU TWO, LIKE ANOTHER BUSYBODY WE KNOW.

NO THANKS.

YOICHI, YOU MIGHT AS WELL COME TOO.

I'M KIDDING.

I'M GOING WITH YOU BECAUSE I'M WORRIED. NOT JUST AS HER OLDER BROTHER, BUT AS A MEMBER OF MIYOSHI.

I JUST THINK NINA WOULD BE LONELY GOING WITH ONLY YOU.

IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO GET IN YOUR WAY.

MIROKU...

ビーム TOUCHED

THAT'S DEFINITELY YOUR REAL REASON.

ALSO, IT'D BE TOO LATE IF I WERE TO WAIT UNTIL YOU MADE A MOVE ON HER.

WHY IS (FUMI/ MIROKU) HERE?

...

COULD IT BE...

I ASKED FUMI TO COME...

SINCE IT'D BE AWKWARD TO GO OUT ALONE WITH SHIJU.

I CAME...

BECAUSE I WAS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT YOU TWO BEING ALONE.

...THAT THIS JUST BECAME A DOUBLE DATE?!

THE AWKWARDNESS HAS DOUBLED.

LET'S SEE...

YEAH.

I DON'T THINK IT'D BE GOOD IF RUMORS WERE TO POP UP OF YOU TWO WALKING AROUND DOWNTOWN WITH WOMEN.

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE WEARING DISGUISES, WE SHOULD PROBABLY AVOID CROWDED AREAS.

WHERE SHOULD WE GO?

HUH?

AH...

THERE'S ACTUALLY A SHOP I WANT TO GO TO.

THIS IS SO CUTE!

NINA, THIS WOULD LOOK SO GOOD ON YOU!

Y-YOU THINK SO?

OH, YOU KNOW.

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D WANT TO COME TO A SHOP THIS... CUTE.

I'M SURPRISED.

IF FUMI WORE THAT, SHE'D LOOK...

OH! THIS WOULD LOOK GREAT ON YOU, FUMI!

WOULDN'T THIS ONE LOOK GOOD TOO?

ADOR-ABLE...!

THAT'S A LITTLE TOO MATURE...

I THINK I'LL ASK FUMI TO TRY IT ON!

OKAY. HOPEFULLY SHE ISN'T TOO GROSSED OUT BY YOU.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ENJOYING YOUR-SELF.

...BUT IT'D BE HELLA CUTE!

...

HUH?

DID YOU FIND SOMETHING AT THE CLOTHING STORE EARLIER?

WHEN DID YOU BUY SOMETHING?

Y-YEAH.

NINA, THAT BAG...

RUSTLE

!

BA-DUMP

REALLY? I WAS SURE YOU'D SAY THOSE CLOTHES WERE TOO CUTESY FOR YOU.

DON'T LOOK!

WHAT DID YOU BUY?

HUH?

NINA...?

BLEEEH

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, MIROKU!

Chapter 34

WE GOT AN OFFER TO APPEAR ON *TRAVELS TOGETHER*?!
WHAT?!

IT'S A SHOW WHERE THE GUESTS GO ON A TRIP WITH THE PEOPLE THEY'RE MOST INTERESTED IN AT THE TIME.

?
WHAT'S *TRAVELS TOGETHER*?

THIS SHOW IS FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO EXPAND THEIR SOCIAL CIRCLES BUT HAVE NO WAY OF DOING SO.
IT GIVES THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD NEW RELATIONSHIPS OVER THE COURSE OF THE TRIP.

A LOT OF PEOPLE WATCH IT BECAUSE THE GUEST PAIRINGS ARE INTERESTING.

SO IT'S A TEAR-JERKER?

I CRY AT LITERALLY EVERY EPISODE!

AS A FORMER LONER, IT'S A TV SERIES THAT HAS NEVER FAILED TO MOVE ME!

UH, NO... IT'S JUST A TRAVEL PROGRAM...

FUMI, YOU'RE GOING WITH US?

ALTHOUGH IT'S CONSIDERED A TRIP, THE PLACE WE'LL BE GOING TO IS IN THE KANTO REGION AND WE'LL ONLY BE STAYING FOR ONE NIGHT.

HEH HEH, I'M GLAD WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO ON THE TRIP TOGETHER!

WATCH YOURSELF, SON.

YES! I'LL BE THERE TO HELP WITH ANYTHING YOU NEED.

GUH!

IT'S TENKA.

ACTUALLY...

SO, WHO'S GOING TO BE TRAVELING WITH US?

I GET TO SEE KIRA?

SINCE IT'S FOR WORK, LET'S ALL GET ALONG, OKAY?

NOT THEM AGAIN!

HEY...

BECAUSE ROU SAID HE WANTED TO GO WITH MIYOSHI.

WHY DID WE GET THE OFFER?

...HUH.

I DON'T MIND, SINCE IT'S EASIER FOR US THAT WAY.

HE'S BEEN BUSY RECENTLY.

BY THE WAY, YOUR EXECUTIVE VP ISN'T HERE TODAY.

I'M HAPPY TO HEAR THAT.

SINCE THIS IS A SPECIAL EPISODE...

SINCE THIS IS A SPECIAL EPISODE OF *TRAVELS TOGETHER*, WE'LL BE SOLVING RIDDLES FOR AN ESCAPE GAME SET IN A RESORT!

LET'S BECOME FRIENDS...

LET'S SHUFFLE INTO DIFFERENT GROUPS SO WE CAN GET CLOSER.

THERE'S A SPECIAL DINNER WAITING FOR THE TEAM THAT FINISHES FASTEST.

WE'LL PAIR OFF INTO THREE GROUPS AND CHALLENGE OURSELVES WITH THREE POSSIBLE ROUTES.

WAAAH, I'M SO NERVOUS!

WE'RE GOING TO DECIDE BY DRAWING STRAWS?

APPARENTLY, THEY'LL BE RENOVATING AFTER THIS EVENT IS OVER, SO THE SHOW'S PRODUCERS WENT OVER-BOARD.

GLOOM

GLOOM

IS IT OKAY WITH THE HOTEL THAT THEY WENT THIS FAR DECORATING?

S-SCARE FACTORS?!

THERE ARE THREE ROUTES, BUT ALL OF THEM FEATURE THE SAME DIFFICULTY AND SCARE FACTORS.

OH? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?

UM, WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY "SCARE FACTORS"...?

WHILE RUNNING FROM ZOMBIES AND SOLVING THE RIDDLES SCATTERED AROUND THE HOTEL.

THIS TIME, WE'LL BE ESCAPING FROM A "HOTEL OF HORRORS"...

...

I THINK IT'LL BE LIKE A TEST OF COURAGE WITH SOME RIDDLE-SOLVING ELEMENTS.

SOUNDS GOOD.

LET'S HURRY UP AND DRAW STRAWS.

FWAP

READY AND...!

ZOU, ARE YOU OKAY?

HA... HA HA...

ふぇ

MIROKU, ARE YOU NOT SCARED OF GHOSTS?

WELL, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY BEFORE, SO...

OH, BUT I HAVE SEEN AN INJURED FAIRY BEFORE.

A FAIRY?

THAT WAS DEFINITELY NOT A FAIRY!

I HOPE HER WOUNDS HEALED QUICKLY...

FWIP

I ASKED IF SHE WAS OKAY AND SHE TOLD ME, "NEVER CHANGE," BEFORE SHE DISAPPEARED.

SHE WAS WEARING WHITE CLOTHES AND WAS COVERED IN BLOOD.

S-SURE!

IN ANY CASE, LET'S WORK HARD TO SOLVE THESE RIDDLES SO WE CAN HURRY UP AND ESCAPE!

SOMETIMES I SEE OTHER FAIRIES, BUT THEY ALWAYS DISAPPEAR WITH A SMILE WHEN I TALK TO THEM.

DOES HE HAVE NATURAL EXORCISM POWERS?!

STILL, WHERE IS THE KEY TO GET OUT OF THIS ROOM?

LOOM

GLOOM

I-I'M SORRY.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. WE ALL HAVE OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, SO LET'S JUST DO OUR BEST!

DEPRESSED

I'M TERRIBLE WHEN IT COMES TO BOTH HORROR AND SOLVING RIDDLES...

YOU...

MIROKU, BEHIND...

FWAP

!

TWIST

PRINCE CHARM-ING...?

FWUMP

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

WAFT

M-MIROKU...

AH...

THERE IT IS!

MIROKU AND ZOU HAVE REACHED THE GOAL!

I WONDER IF ZOU'S DOING OKAY...

SO OF COURSE I'M WORRIED.

HMPH...

WHY IS AN OSSAN LIKE YOU WORRYING ABOUT HIM?

WELL, FROM HOW HE WAS ACTING EARLIER, IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S VERY GOOD WITH THIS SORT OF THING.

NOT GOOD, BUT NOT BAD. WHAT ABOUT YOU, OSSAN?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, KIRA? ARE YOU GOOD AT THESE KINDS OF GAMES?

I FEEL LIKE–

GRAB

BUT...

TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT THAT GOOD AT THEM.

THAT'S A LITTLE SURPRIS-ING.

A ZOMBIE!

!!

I CAN BE THE SHIELD THAT PROTECTS YOU.

YOU TAKE CARE OF THE RIDDLE, AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS GUY.

I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE IT!

HEY, KIRA.

LET'S SPLIT UP OUR DUTIES.

OUR DUTIES...?

O-OH, OKAY.

GREAT.

THAT BROAD BACK...

SOMETHING ABOUT IT REAS-SURES ME.

I FEEL LIKE I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE...

DAD...?

S-SURE...

F-FORGET I SAID THAT! LET'S HURRY AND RUN AWAY FROM THE ZOMBIE!

YOICHI WAS SHOCKED TO BE CALLED "DAD."

BLUSH

Chapter 35

MIYOSHI AND TENKA ARE APPEARING ON A TV SHOW WHERE THEY MUST ESCAPE FROM A HOTEL FULL OF HORRORS.

HERE IS A SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS EVENTS.

THAT LEFT...

MIROKU AND ZOU WERE ABLE TO EVADE THE ZOMBIES WITH MIROKU'S INNATE PRINCELINESS...

AND YOICHI AND KIRA WERE ABLE TO GET OUT BY EACH FOCUSING ON THEIR STRONG POINTS.

GRRRRR

SHIJU!

なぁ!!

なぁ!!

あ!!

あ!!

THIS WAY!

SHIJU AND ROU.

GRRRR

WHOA!

PANT

PANT

THANKS FOR THAT, ROU.

I'M PRETTY GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING.

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!

LATELY, I'VE BEEN FOCUSED ON BEING BOTH COOL *AND* CUTE!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE CUTE ONE IN THE GROUP, RIGHT?

ARE YOU SURE?

WHISPER コソ…

HEH HEH!

THANK YOU!

OH, THERE'S A RIDDLE HERE...

HUH. WELL, IF IT WORKS FOR YOU...

SHIJU AND ROU HAVE REACHED THE GOAL!

MAY I SEE IT?

●FM▲■JJ

●FM▲■JJ... WHAT COULD IT MEAN?

WOW, SHIJU! YOU'RE AMAZING!

OOPS...

HUH?!

BEEP BEEP

IF WE USE THE HINT ON THE WALL, IT'D BE J... A...

YOU DID...

A GREAT JOB.

GOOD WORK.

YOU ALL RIGHT?

THANKS!

BUT NO ONE ELSE IS HERE!

ガラン

EMPTY

WELL, WE FOUND OUR WAY OUT...

HUH?

WOOHOO! FIRST PLACE!

I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE IN FIRST PLACE.

1ST PLACE:
SHIJU AND ROU

YEAH...

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN SECOND PLACE.

2ND PLACE:
YOICHI AND KIRA

WH-WHAT?!

HEY, KIRA.

...

STARE

I'LL LEND YOU A HAND.

COME TO ME FOR HELP IF ANYTHING HAPPENS WITH HIM.

ABOUT YOUR EXECU-TIVE VP...

WHOA!

SHOVE

"DAD"!

HEY...

LIKE THAT...

IT'S NOT...

FWIP

OH?

NEITHER IS MIROKU.

OH, HE'S NOT BACK YET...

WHERE'S ZOU?

I CAN IMAGINE THAT...

HE'S PROBABLY BUSY BEING PRINCE CHARMING.

LIKE YOU CAN TALK.

LIKE FATHER AND SON!

YOU TWO SEEM LIKE YOU'VE GOTTEN A LOT CLOSER, EH?

IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAME IN LAST.

WOW, YOU WERE ALL SO FAST!

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

ゾロ ゾロ

CROWD

ゾロ ゾロ

CROWD

WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON?!

BEING ASKED TO LEAVE.

UM, I'M SORRY, ZOMBIES...

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN SOME-ONE PLACATE THE ZOMBIES IN A HORROR ESCAPE GAME...

WE WEREN'T ABLE TO GIVE YOU THE CHASE YOU WANTED...

SORRY...

GLUM

MIROKU, YOU KNOW YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE PUT YOUR HANDS ON THAT KID.

WATCH THE WAY YOU SAY THINGS!

YOU MEAN GROOM.

I CAN NEVER BE A BRIDE NOW...

AND MIROKU, DON'T JUST GO ALONG WITH HIM.

WHAT A COINCIDENCE. I WAS JUST THINKING THE SAME THING.

I FEEL LIKE...

MIROKU WOULD BE ABLE TO SURVIVE EVEN IF THE WORLD WENT FULL ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE MOVIE.

SPARKLE キラ

1ST PLACE:
EXPENSIVE
GRILLED BEEF

SPARKLE キラ

THE FAT IS SWEET AND RICH. IT'S SO DELICIOUS THAT IT MELTS THE INSTANT YOU PUT IT IN YOUR MOUTH!

NOW YOU SOUND LIKE A FOOD CRITIC...

I'VE NEVER HAD MEAT THIS GOOD BEFORE!

MMMM, THIS IS THE BEST! ♡

キラ SPARKLE

2ND PLACE: GRILLED FREE-RANGE CHICKEN

キラ SPARKLE

EAT UP!

YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A GROWTH SPURT, RIGHT?

THIS PART'S COOKED PERFECTLY TOO.

CHEW もぐ"

CHEW もぐ"

HE'S JUST LIKE A DAD...

THE FLAVOR REALLY SOAKED INTO THE MEAT EVEN THOUGH IT'S THICK, AND THE SKIN IS SO CRISPY!

ちーまー

3RD PLACE: VEGETARIAN DISHES MADE FOR BUDDHIST MONKS

DIIIING

HMPH

SO I DON'T REALLY MIND!

I ATE THIS KIND OF THING WHILE I WAS DIETING...

HOWEVER, NONE OF THE MEN KNEW...

ABOUT THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THIS FILMING...

NOW, NOW...

BUT IT'S SO FRUS-TRATING!

AT LEAST IT'S GOOD!

CHOMP

CHOMP

A PRANK WAKE-UP CALL!

IT WAS...

THE HORROR ESCAPE ROOMS WERE THOUGHT UP IN AN ATTEMPT TO TIRE OUT THE GUESTS SO THEY'D SLEEP SOUNDLY.

BUT THEY WERE JUST A COVER FOR THE REAL TV SHOW!

A PRANK WAKE-UP CALL...

IS A TERRIFYING PRANK IN WHICH THE TARGET IS ATTACKED WHEN THEY'RE SLEEPING, COMPLETELY DEFENSELESS, IN THE HOPES OF FILMING A GENUINE REACTION!

3:00 AM

GOOD MORNING!

I, MOMOKA, WILL BE YOUR EMCEE FOR TODAY!

E-/ WHISPER

E-/ WHISPER

THANK YOU!

OF COURSE, WE'VE RECEIVED COOPERATION FROM THE MANAGERS OF BOTH GROUPS FOR THIS PRANK.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO SAY?

YES!

I'M SURE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CAPTURE FOOTAGE SO AMAZING IT CAN'T BE SHOWN ON TV!

THAT WOULD BE A BAD THING, THOUGH?!

LET'S GET GOING THEN!

TENKA ZOU

FIRST UP IS ZOU.

ヒソ WHISPER

LET'S START WITH THIS ROOM.

ヒソ WHISPER

ひょこっ PEEK

LET'S GET A LITTLE CLOSER.

...AH!

THAT SEEMS JUST LIKE HIM...

WOW, IT'S SO CLEAN IN HERE!

SILENT

EVERYONE, IN JUST ONE SECOND, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE ZOU'S...

SILENT

THAT'S HIS BED!

SLEEP-ING... FACE...

HMM?

BAM

HUH? HE'S NOT HERE!

DON'T TELL ME...
ROU ISN'T IN HIS ROOM, EITHER!
ガッ
EMPTY
SHOCK
WE WON'T HAVE ANY FOOTAGE TO USE AT THIS RATE!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

Chapter 36

TENKA
KIRA

BAM

WE'RE AT KIRA'S ROOM.

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM!

FIRED UP

THIS TIME I'LL BE SURE TO CAPTURE HIS SLEEPING FACE ON CAMERA...

TO SHOW THE VIEWERS WATCHING IN FRONT OF THEIR TVS THE MOST PERFECT SCENE EVER!

FIRED UP

CREAK

I'M GOING IN!

SNEAK ...

WHISPER Ey

IT SEEMS LIKE HIS BEDROOM IS THIS WAY.

Ey WHISPER

IS KIRA IN HERE...?

KER-CHAK

!!

ZZZZZZ

THIS IS 100% BETTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE WE COULD HAVE EXPECTED TO FIND.

IT WASN'T ME...

LET ME SLEEP A LITTLE LONGER...

DID ZOU TURN IT ON BECAUSE HE COULDN'T SLEE-?

IS THAT A CAMERA?

HMM...?

IS IT MORNING? IT'S SO BRIGHT...

HUH? A CAMERA...?

DON'T WORRY, I'LL PROTECT YOU TWO!

ROU ...!

I GUESS WE SHOULD CALL OUR MANAGER.

(HAPPY) PRANK SUCCESS!

UH, COULD YOU PLEASE LOOK AT MY SIGN?

HUH? SOME-ONE'S TRES-PASSING?

THERE'S A CAMERA IN THE ROOM!

IS A PRANK-

OOD ORN-ING.

ZOU! WAKE UP!

UM...

TENKA WILL BE JOINING US ON OUR PRANK!

NODS OFF

NODS OFF

LET'S START OVER! FROM HERE ON...

Y-YEAH...

RIGHT, KIRA?

Y-YEAH! I'M L-LOOKING FORWARD TO IT TOO!

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE'S STILL ANNOYED THAT WE SAID WE'D REPORT HER TRES-PASSING...

AREN'T YOU?

I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!

IT CAN'T BE HELPED SINCE WE RUINED THE PRANK.

URGH...

THAT'S TRUE, BUT...

WILL THE TV SHOW'S VIEWERS...

EVEN CARE ABOUT SOME OSSANS WAKING UP?

344
MIYOSHI YO

I WONDER WHAT YOICHI'S ROOM WILL LOOK LIKE.

I'M KIND OF CURIOUS...

IT'S PROBABLY FULL OF PAPER-WORK.

HE SEEMS LIKE THE SERIOUS TYPE, SO I DOUBT THERE'LL BE ANYTHING INTER-ESTING.

THAT'S TRUE. HE'S A CEO, AFTER ALL...

HUH. THAT MEANS HE'S EVEN LESS SUITED TO BEING PRANKED.

UWAH!

ZOU, ARE YOU OKAY?

PROTEIN POWDER AND A DUMB-BELL...?!

PROTEIN POWDER

WAIT... WHAT'S ALL THIS?!

DUMBBELL

DON'T TELL ME HE'S OBSESSED WITH WEIGHT-LIFTING!

WE'VE ARRIVED AT HIS BEDROOM! LET'S GO INSIDE.

KER-CHAK

GOOD MORNING!

!!!

MMM...

!

SITS UP

A CAMERA ...?

zzz のや..

OUR PRANK WAS A SUCCESS!
HUH?
UM...
LET'S GO TO SHIJU'S ROOM NEXT.
UH... WHAT'S GOING ON?!
SHOULDN'T THERE BE MORE?
IS THAT ALL?
WE ALREADY MESSED THINGS UP, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

SHAAAAAA

ゴリ

∞

WHATEVER! I'M A BRAVE WOMAN! PLEASE, LET HIM BE–

KER-CHAK

I CAN HEAR HIM MOVING AROUND!

HE'S DEFINITELY ALREADY AWAKE!

344
MIYOSHI SHIJU

RUSTLE

ガサガサ

RUSTLE

CLACK

CLATTER

WHA...?

NAKED

FWAP

WHY ARE YOU TAKING A SHOWER?!

UMMM, WHAT IS GOING ON?!

WAKE-UP CALL?

A PRANK...

I FEEL LIKE I'M THE ONE IN THE WRONG...

BUT HALF OF YOU EITHER WEREN'T IN YOUR ROOMS OR WERE ALREADY AWAKE...

YES...

EARLIER?!

I WAS ACTUALLY JUST ABOUT TO GO TO BED. I WAS DRINKING WITH MIROKU EARLIER.

UH... YEAH?

THE THREE OF US DRANK TOGETH-ER.

YOICHI WENT BACK TO HIS ROOM FIRST...

BUT MIROKU AND I DRANK UNTIL MIDNIGHT.

ALCO-HOL

HE'S PROBABLY ASLEEP RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

REALLY?!

YOU REALLY THINK SO?!

YOU'RE SCARING ME...

344
MIYOSHI MIROKU

SHE PROBABLY HASN'T GOTTEN ANYTHING WORTH AIRING YET.

SHE'S REALLY GETTING INTO THIS.

I'LL DEFINITELY GET THE PERFECT FOOTAGE!

RUMBLE

THIS TIME...

THE THREE OF US WERE ALL TOGETHER AND YOU WERE ALREADY AWAKE, SO SHE ONLY HAS PRANK FOOTAGE FOR TWO PEOPLE...

NO WONDER SHE'S PANICKING.

IS HE ACTUALLY ASLEEP?!

THIS IS MY CHANCE!

SILENCE

GOOD MORN-ING...?

OUR WAKE-UP PRANK WAS...

HURRY

WAKE-UP

PRAN

SUCCE

KER-CHAK

A SUC... CESS...

WH-
WHA...?

zzz

zzz

WHY IS
IT SO
BRIGHT?

MMM...

BLINK

HUH?!

WHY ARE YOU
COMPLETELY
NAKED?!

WELL, SHIJU TOLD ME THAT ALL GOOD MEN SLEEP NAKED, SO...

SO IT'S *YOUR* FAULT!

CALM DOWN!

WOBBLE

!!

FUMI, ARE YOU OKAY?!

!!!

FWAP

COMP

PUT SOME CLOTHES ON!

MOMOKA SCOLDED THEM SIX WAYS TO SUNDAY.

GLUM

WE CAN'T USE FOOTAGE THAT SHOWS THIS MUCH SKIN!

Chapter 37

A HIGH SCHOOL FESTIVAL?

YEAH.

THEY ASKED IF WE'D BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE.

IT'S RARE FOR US TO GET WORK FROM PLACES OUTSIDE OF MR. LAVENDER'S INFLUENCE.

APPARENTLY, MAKI'S LITTLE SISTER IS ON THE FESTIVAL'S COMMITTEE.

SHE ORIGINALLY ASKED SOMEONE FROM SHINEEZ TO COME, BUT THEY CANCELED ON HER.

I SEE.

SO SHE ASKED US NEXT BECAUSE SHE'S GOT CONNECTIONS WITH OUR MANAGER.

WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE MAKI IS A COMPLETE STRANGER TO US.

I WANT TO HELP HER AND HER SISTER OUT IF THEY NEED IT.

AH... WE'LL BE GIVING A MINI-CONCERT ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL, BUT THE GIRLS ASKED IF WE COULD HELP OUT AT THE FESTIVAL AS MUCH AS POSSI-BLE UNTIL THEN.

CONCERT, ETC.

WHAT DOES THIS "CONCERT, ETC." MEAN?

I GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO ASK AT OUR MEETING.

WHAT COULD WE POSSIBLY DO TO HELP OUT?

CLAMOR
CLAMOR
HOLY CRAP...
IT'S THE REAL DEAL!
HELLO, EVERY-ONE. I'M MIYOSHI'S MIROKU!
THANKS FOR INVITING US TO YOUR CULTURAL FESTIVAL!
EVERY-ONE, QUIET PLEASE!
WE HAVE MIYOSHI HERE AS SPECIAL GUESTS FOR THE FESTIVAL!
BUT WE'VE NEVER DONE THIS SORT OF THING BEFORE, SO SORRY IF WE'RE NOT MUCH HELP.
NOT AT ALL. MAKI IS ALWAYS HELPING US OUT...
NO, THANK YOU FOR COMING!
I KNOW IT'S ASKING FOR A LOT...

THEY'LL PERFORM A MINI-CONCERT AT THREE PM IN THE GYM.

THEY HAVE OTHER OBLIGATIONS AFTER IT ENDS, SO WE'LL HAVE TO BE STRICT WITH THE TIME.

WE'LL HAVE MIYOSHI ENTER FROM THE BACK GATE ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.

I'VE ASKED ATSUDA TO SHOW MIYOSHI AROUND AND GUIDE THEM TO THE STAGE.

I-IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU THREE!

ATSUDA'S GONNA DO IT?

HA HA...

LET'S SEE HOW HE MESSES THIS UP.

THAT CONCLUDES TODAY'S COMMITTEE MEETING.

MORE THAN A DECADE FOR THE TWO OF US.

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I CAME TO A HIGH SCHOOL FESTIVAL?

EVERY-ONE'S SO YOUNG, HUH?

WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A TEN-MINUTE BREAK, THEN I'LL SHOW YOU TO THE STAGE.

GOOD WORK.

OKAY, SOUNDS GOOD.

UM, EXCUSE ME!

MIROKU, YOU SOUND LIKE AN OLD GEEZER.

HUH?!

I HEARD THAT YOU THREE WILL BE HELPING US WITH THE CULTURAL FESTIVAL. IS THAT TRUE?!

UM... Y-YES?

WOW, IT REALLY IS THEM!

CAN I PLEASE HAVE YOUR AUTO-GRAPH?!

WOULD YOU PLEASE JOIN US, EVEN JUST FOR A LITTLE BIT?

OUR CLASS IS DOING A MAID AND BUTLER CAFÉ!

O-OKAY, SURE.

AND I THINK IT'D BE GREAT PR FOR YOUR CONCERT!

WOOHOO! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

LET'S GO TELL THE OTHERS!

YEAH!

I THINK EVERY-ONE WOULD LOVE THAT.

IT'D MAKE FOR A GREAT MEMORY!

I WONDER IF ATSUDA IS OKAY.

WHAT WAS THAT?

UH, I'M A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT ATSUDA.

WHAT IS HE USUALLY LIKE?

ATSUDA? HMM...

HE'S REALLY SERI-OUS AND KIND...

BUT HE'S ALSO SHY.

BUT THIS TIME, HE SNATCHED UP THE ROLE OF BEING YOUR ASSISTANT AT THE FESTIVAL BEFORE ANYONE ELSE COULD VOLUNTEER.

I THINK HE LOVES YOU THREE.

HE ALWAYS LETS OTHER PEOPLE TAKE THE SPOT-LIGHT...

AND STAYS A STEP BEHIND THEM.

IF THAT'S TRUE...

I'D BE... REALLY HAPPY.

IT'S JUST A NORMAL GYM STAGE...

SO PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU NEED THAT WE'RE MISSING.

THIS IS THE STAGE YOU'LL BE USING.

COULD WE PLEASE CHECK THE SPOT-LIGHTS WITH YOU?

MR. MIRO-KU!

WE'RE PLANNING TO START THE CONCERT AT THREE.

WE HAVE ANOTHER GIG LATER THAT DAY, BUT I THINK THREE SHOULD BE FINE.

ATSUDA, ABOUT THE GROUP PERFORM-ING BEFORE US...

THANKS. THAT'S PERFECT.

THEIR SPOT-LIGHTS...

SHOULD BE...

HEY, IF IT ISN'T ATSUDA!

ATSU-DA?

HEY, ATSUDA, COME HANG OUT WITH US!

WAIT, ISN'T THAT GUY NEXT TO HIM FROM MIYOSHI?

SERI-OUSLY?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING UP THERE?

YOU GONNA PUT ON A PLAY?

SORRY, BUT I HAVE TO DO SOME STUFF FOR THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE RIGHT NOW.

UM...

THAT'D BE LIKE AN OGRE STANDING ON STAGE WITH THE THREE MUSKE-TEERS!

WHY DON'T YOU ASK THEM TO PLAY IDOL WITH YOU?

HAH! ATSU-DA AND MIYOSHI? AS IF.

FORGET THAT. COME ON, ATSUDA!

GOOD FOR YOU, GETTING TO BE SURROUNDED BY YOUR THREE FAVORITE IDOLS.

!

DASH

WAIT, ATSUDA!

AN OGRE STANDING ON STAGE WITH THE THREE MUSKE-TEERS!

WHY DON'T YOU ASK THEM TO PLAY IDOL WITH YOU?

CLENCH

INHALE

!

WHERE DID ATSUDA GO OFF TO?

3-A

"I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU."

"I'M STUCK, STUCK ON YOU...

LIKE A PUZZLE PIECE THAT FITS TRUE..."

ATSUDA, YOU'RE A GREAT SINGER.

"I WANT TO SLIDE INTO PLACE NEXT TO YOU!"

AH...

NO, UM...

I...

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?

SO THIS IS LIKE YOUR SECRET HIDEOUT, HUH?

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE FOLLOWED YOU...

YES. MY CLASS-MATES TEASE ME ALL THE TIME...

SO I COME HERE TO SING ALONE.

UM, MR. MIROKU...

WHY *DID* YOU FOLLOW ME?

N-NO, IT'S FINE!

REALLY? I'M GLAD.

I'M SO LAME. I COULDN'T EVEN STAND UP TO THEM...

WHEN I WAS A STUDENT...

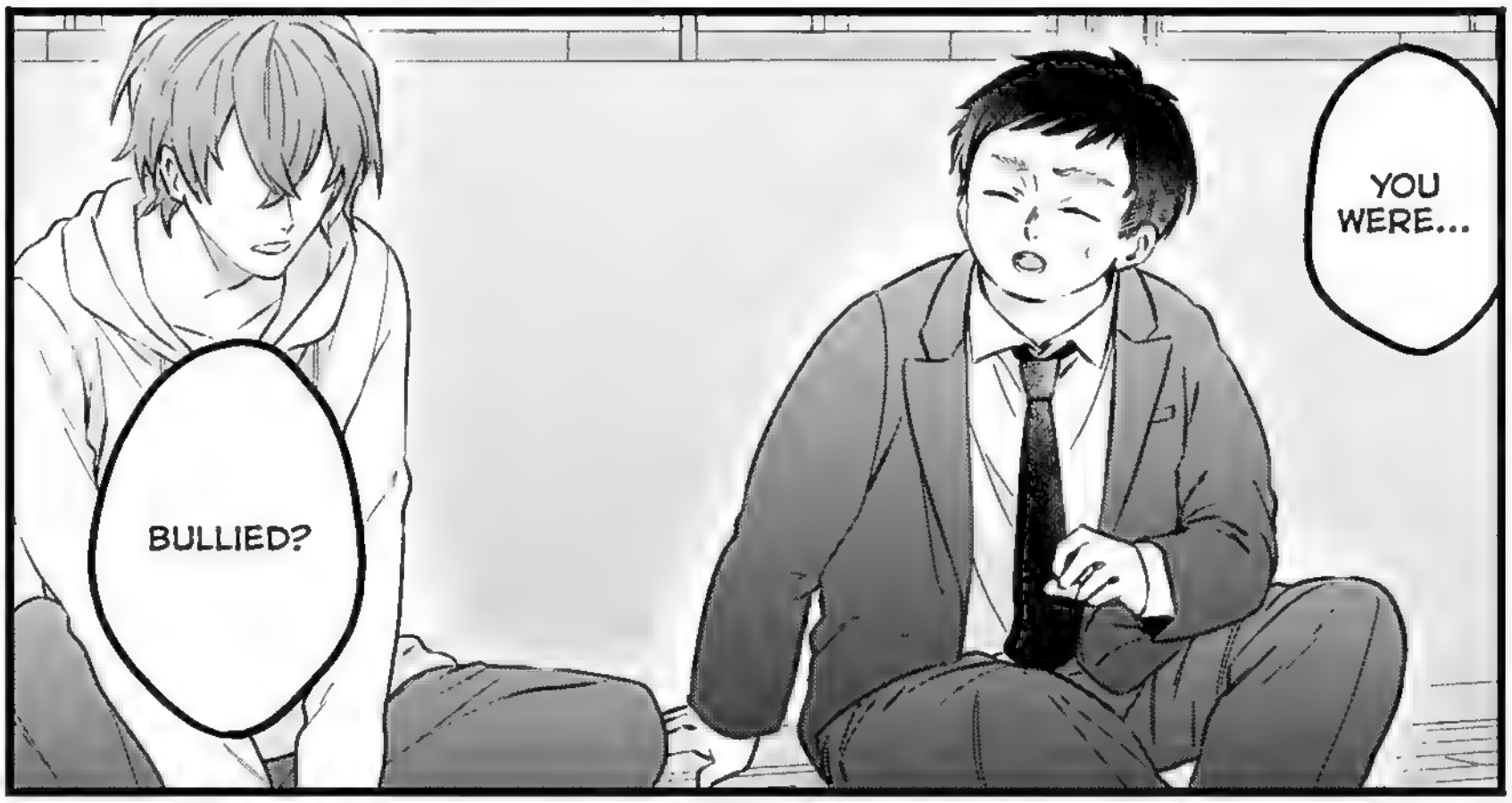
I WAS BULLIED FOR MY SIZE.

...

IT'S BECAUSE I COULDN'T JUST LET YOU BE.

HUH?

Chapter 38


BULLIED?
YOU WERE...

I GAVE UP ON A LOT AND WAS A SHUT-IN UNTIL RECENTLY.
I CAUSED A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR MY FAMILY TOO.
WHEN WE WERE MOSTLY GROWN UP, I WENT THROUGH A LOT BECAUSE OF MY WEIGHT.
EVEN IN HIGH SCHOOL...
YEAH.
I WAS BIGGER THEN, SO I WAS MADE FUN OF A LOT.

I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING BY MYSELF...

BUT MY FAMILY, YOICHI, SHIJU...

AND OTHER PEOPLE AROUND ME HELPED ME BECOME AN IDOL.

BUT ONE DAY I SAW A DANCE VIDEO...

THAT MADE ME WANT TO TRY DANCING TOO.

IS THAT A GOOD ENOUGH REASON?

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO HELP OTHERS... RATHER, I WANT TO HELP YOU TOO.

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO THINKS THIS WAY.

BESIDES...

HUH?

MR. MIROKU...

!

YOU HAVE PEOPLE WATCHING OVER YOU, YOU KNOW.

AND JUST A LITTLE BIT OF COURAGE...

AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO GROW...

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CHARM TONS OF OTHERS INTO TURNING YOUR WAY TOO.

MEAN BY THA~?

WHAT DO YOU...

AIIII!

TOMONO!

I KNEW YOU'D BE IN HERE!

ATSUDA!

RATTLE

I AM.

YOU'D BETTER BE.

I WAS SO WORRIED WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU'D RUN OFF AND ABANDONED MIYOSHI!

S-SORRY...

UGH! YOU ALWAYS RUN HERE TO HIDE RIGHT AWAY!

I MESSED UP THE ONE JOB I WAS GIVEN...

IS IT, UH... OKAY FOR ME TO GO BACK?

HUH?

LET'S GO BACK.

YOU'D BETTER SEE THINGS THROUGH TO THE END, ATSUDA!

DON'T BE SILLY.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO BE MIYOSHI'S ASSISTANT.

...OKAY!

LET'S GO BACK, ATSUDA.

I GAVE YOU THAT TASK BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WERE THE BEST PERSON TO DO IT.

THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL

MIYOSHI

WELCOME BACK!

3-A

SPARKLE

MY LADY!

MY LORD!

SPARKLE

I'LL SHOW YOU TO YOUR SEATS RIGHT AWAY.

I'VE BEEN AWAITING YOUR RETURN.

SMILE

I FEEL LIKE THAT'S SUCH A WASTE, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT.

EXCUSE ME.

ヒソ… WHISPER

WHISPER ヒソ…

I THINK MY HEART MIGHT GIVE OUT.

LET'S GULP OUR DRINKS DOWN AND MOVE ON.

I KNEW THEY'D BE PERFORM-ING TODAY, BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE ONE OF THEM IN A BUTLER CAFÉ!

I-ISN'T HE FROM MIYOSHI?!

MAY I RECOMMEND A CHOICE OF TEAS?

APPEARS

FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING, BUT IT APPEARS AS THOUGH YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE DECIDING.

WHAT?!

PLEASE JUST GIVE ME ONE OF EVERY-THING!

SORRY...

NO, IT'S NO PROB–

I KNEW IT.

D-DON'T WORRY! I'LL HELP YOU.

WILL I BE ABLE TO FINISH IT ALL?

I ORDERED THE ENTIRE MENU WITHOUT THINKING...

YOU SHOULDN'T LOSE YOUR COOL LIKE THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE WITH SUCH A CUTE LADY.

I CAME TO MAKE SURE YOUR ORDER WASN'T A MISTAKE.

HUH?!

WE'LL DRINK IT ALL!

I CAN'T BELIEVE...

THERE'S SUCH A HUGE CROWD, EVEN IF IT'S JUST THIS SCHOOL'S STUDENTS AND GRADUATES.

THANKFULLY, WE WERE ABLE TO HANDLE THINGS BECAUSE ATSUDA AND THE OTHERS SET A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF VISITORS AND STUFF.

HE'S ONE OF MIYOSHI'S FANS, YOU KNOW.

HE WAS ONE OF THE STUDENTS WHO PUSHED FOR MIYOSHI TO BE THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL GUEST.

ATSUDA? YOU MEAN THE GUY WHO WAS WITH MAKI'S LITTLE SISTER?

AND THAT'S NOT ALL!

HE'S A REALLY GOOD SINGER!

HE IS?

YEP!

I THINK HE NATURALLY HAS A CLEAR VOICE, BUT I HAPPENED TO HEAR HIM SINGING "PUZZLE"...

AND I REALLY FELL FOR THE SERENE WAY HE SANG!

HE MUST BE REALLY GOOD THEN!

I WANT TO HEAR HIM SING TOO.

!

RING

HELLO? YES...

GOT IT.

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

HE HAD MY PART DOWN PERFECTLY TOO. I WISH I COULD SING WITH HIM AGAIN...

IN THAT CASE, YOU TWO SHOULD HEAD OVER TO THE STAGE.

YEP!

I'LL HELP OUT HERE A LITTLE LONGER BEFORE HEADING OVER.

WILL YOU BE OKAY ALONE?

SHE SAID SHE WANTS TO DO A FINAL TECHNICAL CHECK AND ASKED IF WE COULD GO OVER THERE.

FUMI JUST CALLED.

WE STILL HAVE A SHIFT LEFT...

OH... BUT WE CAN'T ALL GO.

THANK YOU, MIROKU.

SEE YOU LATER!

THANKS.

I HAVE TO WORK HARD TO MAKE UP FOR THEM LEAVING EARLY!

ALL RIGHT.

WELCOME HOME...

BLUUUUSH

I'VE BEEN AWAITING YOUR RETURN!

MY LADY!

IT SEEMS LIKE HE'S TRYING REALLY HARD...

D-DOESN'T IT FEEL LIKE MIROKU'S CUTENESS IS EVEN MORE LETHAL THAN EARLIER?

OH, IS THAT...?

IT SAYS "MIYOSHI."

HUH?!

WOBBLE

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF!

MIYO

IT'S TINY AND NOT REALLY WORTH...

FIDGET

UM... I MADE IT EARLIER IN THE CRAFT CLUB'S CORNER.

FIDGET

SHOW-ING YOU, BUT... UM...

A-ACTUALLY, SHE'S A HUGE MIYOSHI FAN! SINCE YOU GUYS DON'T HAVE ANY MERCH OUT, SHE DECIDED TO MAKE HER OWN.

RIGHT?

Y-YEAH!

THANKS!

SQUEEZE

THAT'S NOT TRUE!

SEEING IT MADE ME REALLY HAPPY.

WHY?!

I WANT TO DIE NOW, AT THE PEAK OF MY BLISS...

I'M DYING...

SIZZLE

SO I'LL CARRY HER TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.

I'M A LITTLE WORRIED...

I had no regrets

CUT IT OUT WITH THE GALLANT LAST WORDS THING!

HUH?!

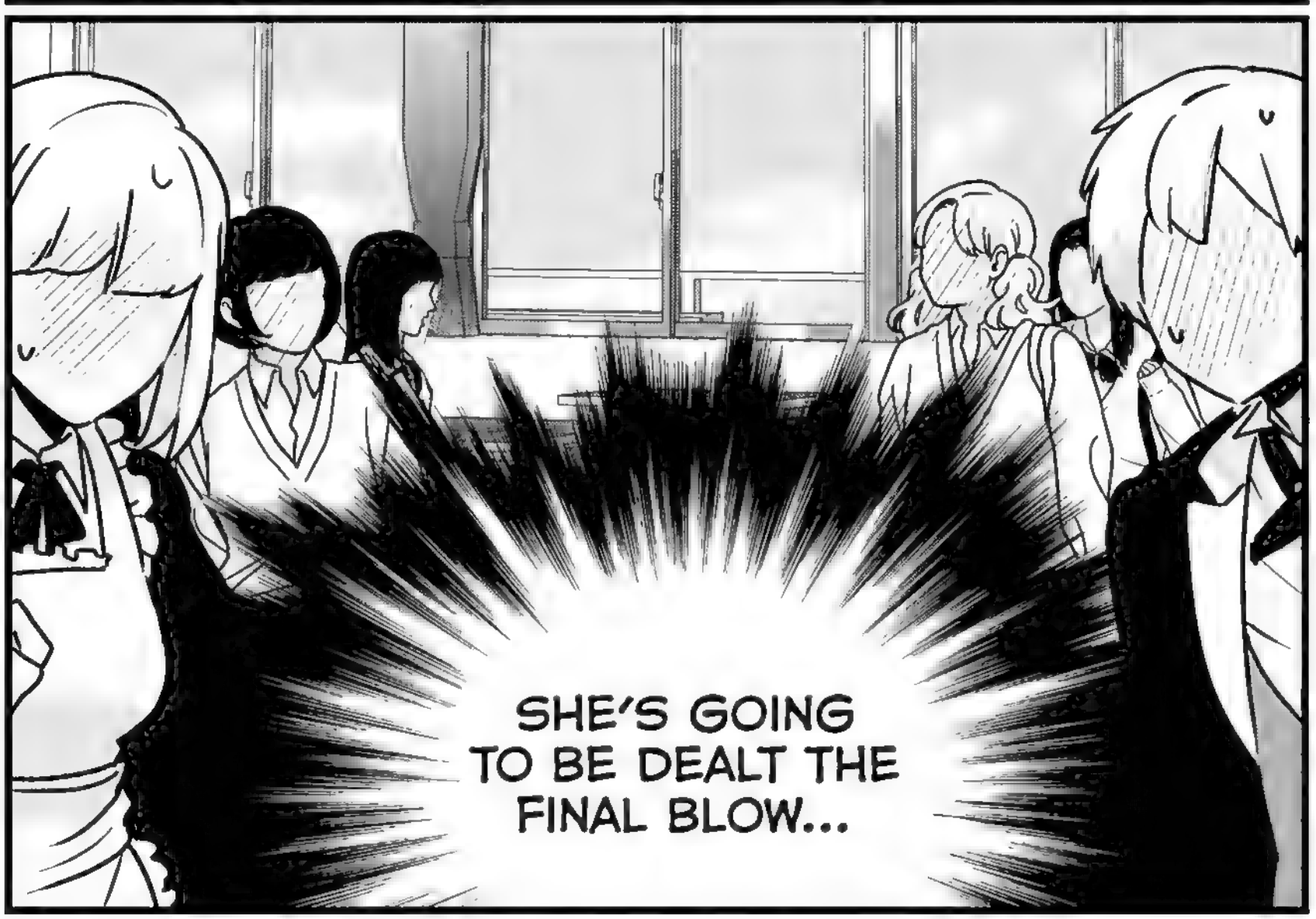
SORRY, ATSUDA.

CAN YOU TELL SHIJU AND YOICHI THAT I'LL BE LATE?

O-OF COURSE!

CLAMOR

BA-DUMP
PRINCE MIROKU?!
WAH!


SHE'S GOING TO BE DEALT THE FINAL BLOW...

MEANWHILE...

MIYOSHI

SPECIAL GUEST
MIYOSHI
STARTING AT 3:00 P.M.

MIROKU SURE IS LATE.

KER-CHAK

I HOPE HE'S ALL RIGHT AND THAT HE'S NOT BEING OVER-WORKED SINCE WE LEFT HIM ALONE AT THE CAFÉ...

MR. SHIJU!

MR. YOICHI!

UM...

MR. MIROKU WILL BE LATE SINCE HE'S CARRYING A STUDENT TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.

!!

YOU'RE... ATSUDA, RIGHT?

PLEASE EXCUSE ME!

ガヤ CHATTER

IT'S ALREADY PAST TIME FOR OUR PERFOR-MANCE TO START!

HEY, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

ガヤ CHATTER

NURSE'S OFFICE

THE NURSE'S OFFICE!

THERE IT IS!

HII RATTLE

EXCUSE ME! THIS GIRL ISN'T FEELING WELL...

WHY?!

ME TOO... I JUST FELT IT GET A LOT WORSE. ESPECIALLY MY HEART...

URK!

UGH... I'M NOT FEELING WELL EITHER.

AT THE SAME TIME...

CAUSING DESTRUCTION EVERYWHERE HE GOES.

CLAMOR

WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?

THEY STILL AREN'T START-ING?

CLAMOR

SHOULD WE JUST HAVE SOMEONE ELSE GO BEFORE US?

WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER.

WE HAVE ANOTHER GIG AFTER THIS, SO WE CAN'T JUST PUSH OUR PERFOR-MANCE BACK.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

OUR FIRST SONG IS "PUZZLE." MIROKU'S THE MAIN VOCALIST FOR IT AND IT STARTS WITH HIS SOLO.

I DON'T THINK I COULD SING BOTH MY PART AND HIS...

AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A LITTLE COURAGE...

UM...

OH, IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE STARTING!

CLAMOR

HUH?

THAT'S...

CLAMOR

ATSU-DA...

CLAMOR

WHAT?

ISN'T THAT ATSUDA?

WHISPER

CLAMOR

EVERYONE'S STARES FEEL LIKE THEY'RE FILLED WITH MALICE.

I WANT TO RUN AWAY. I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T BREATHE PROPERLY.

I'M SCARED.

IT WAS PRESUMPTUOUS OF ME TO THINK THAT I COULD FILL MR. MIROKU'S PART.

I KNEW THAT FROM THE BEGINNING!

BUT... I ALREADY KNEW THAT.

CLENCH

STILL...

INHALE !!

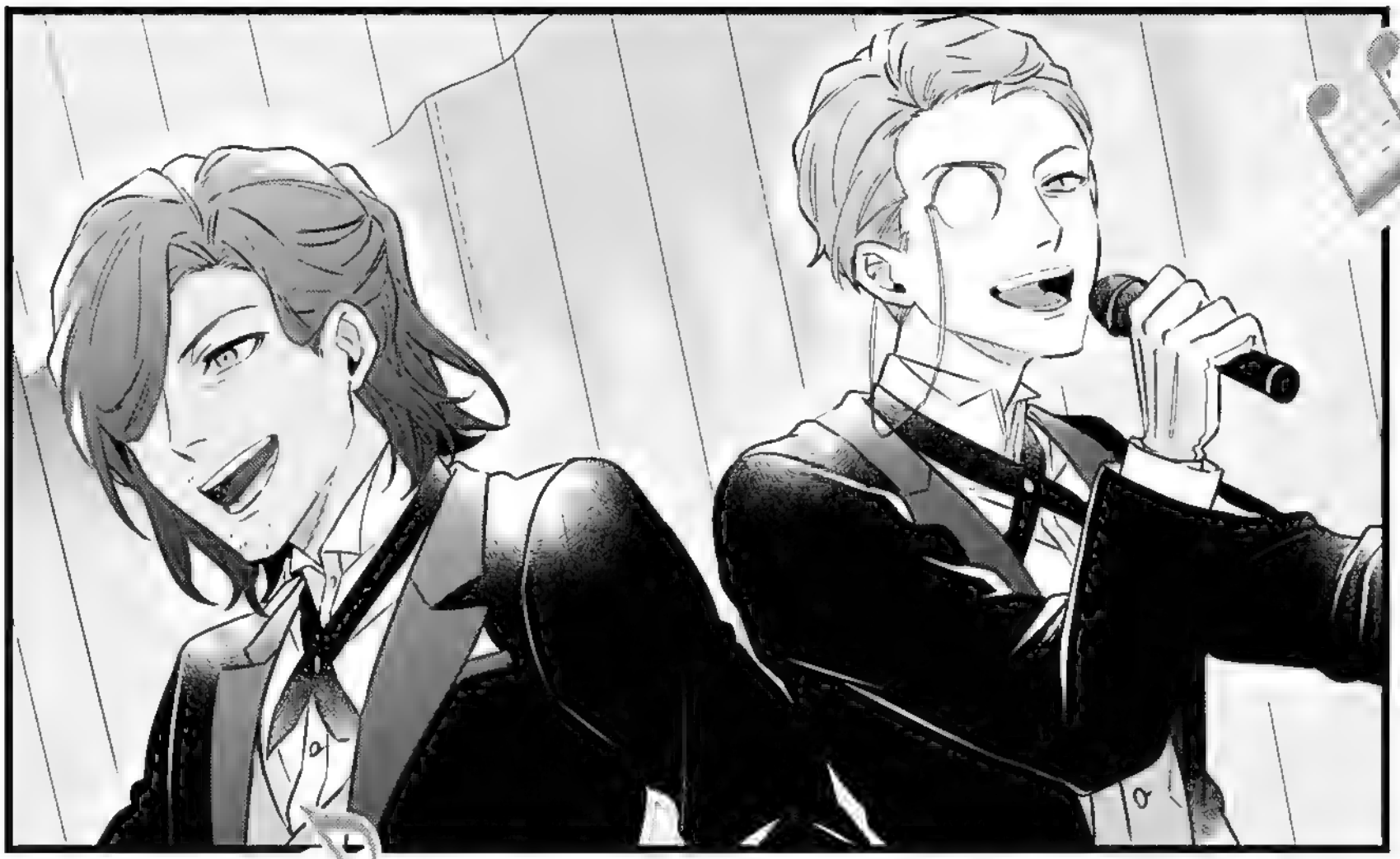
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP MIYOSHI RIGHT NOW!

THIS IS...

WHOA...

HIS VOICE IS SO NICE!

CHEEEEER



RATTLE

CHEEEEER

MIROKU!

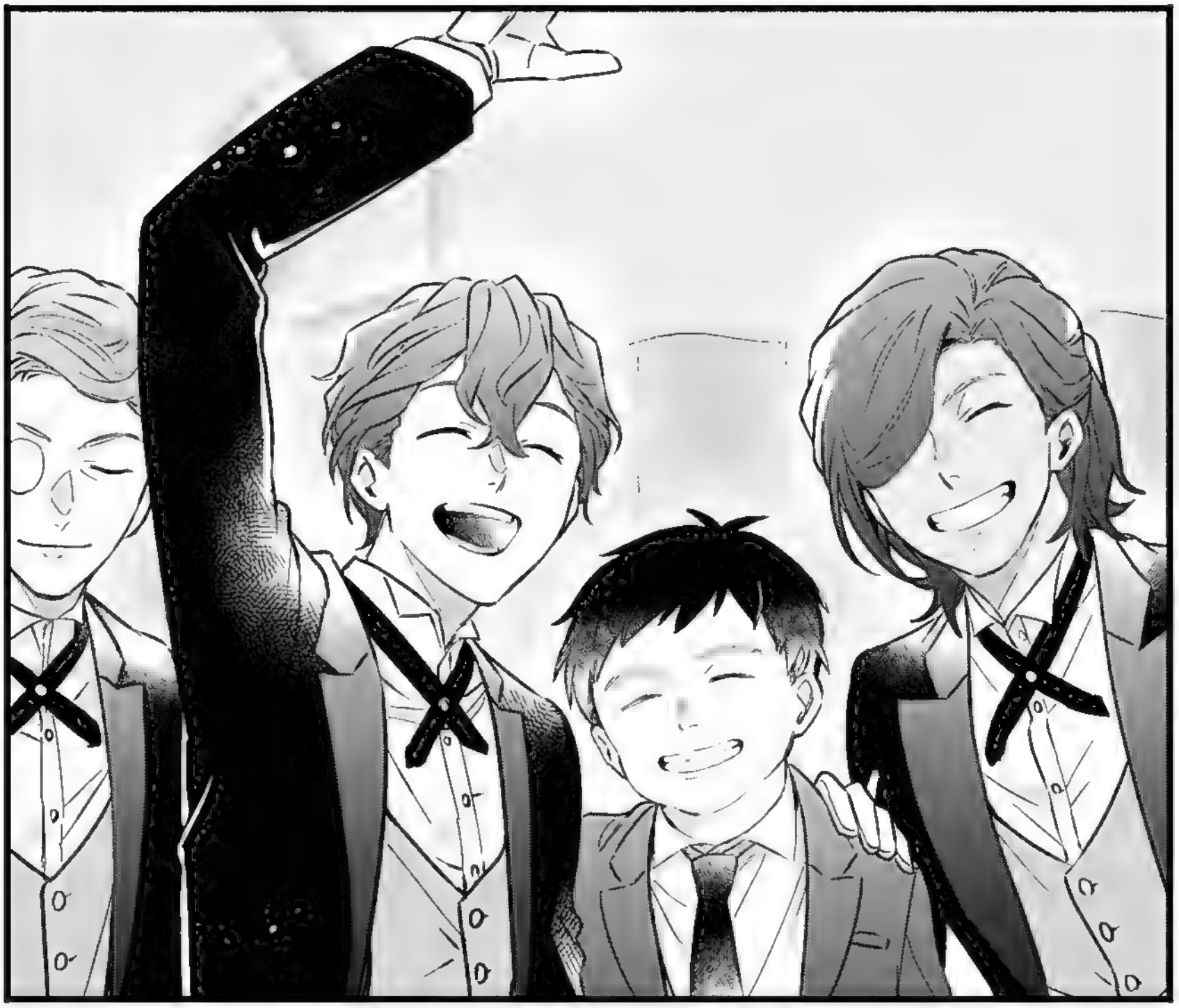
SLAM

SORRY I'M LATE!

WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

MIROKU!

MIYOSHI!



I WAS REALLY WORRIED THERE FOR A SECOND.

IT SEEMS FOOTAGE OF OUR FESTIVAL CONCERT IS TRENDING ONLINE.

I'M SORRY.

THE FAMOUS SINGING

BUT RATHER THAN US, MOST PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOLER WITH THE GREAT VOICE WHO SANG WITH US.

E REALLY A HIGH SCHOOLER?! HE'S SO OOD! I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S NOT A PRO!

D I THOUGHT IT WAS ALL FAKE LOL

HE GOT TO SING WITH MIYOSHI, NG THAT HE'S ACTUALLY THAT GOOD.

ATSUDA REALLY WAS GOOD.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. ESPECIALLY SINCE WE LEFT THE CAFÉ TO YOU ALONE.

YEAH...

WOULD YOU PLEASE ALLOW ME TO SING AS A BACK-UP SINGER JUST UNTIL MR. MIROKU GETS HERE?

I WAS REALLY SURPRISED WHEN HE SUGGESTED HIS IDEA RIGHT BEFORE THE CONCERT.

HE'S DEFINITELY GOING PLACES IF HE WAS ABLE TO SING LIKE THAT EVEN THOUGH IT WAS HIS FIRST TIME ON STAGE.

I'M SURE HE WILL GO FAR.

THANK YOU VERY MUC

OSSAN IDOL

Original Short Story

"The Events of That Day"

by Mochiko Mochida

I guess I can sing. It's not like I hate it.

Dancing is hard, but I kind of enjoy it.

I love putting smiles on other people's faces.

Being surrounded by girls that fawn over me… To be honest, I'm still not sure how to feel about that.

I hate working out in the summer. Moving continuously in the heat makes my energy just seep out of me, even when we practice indoors with the A/C on full blast.

"Ugh, this sucks…"

"Just a little more, Yoichi. Keep at it."

"Bro, how do you have this much energy?"

"Since I don't have to focus on smiling while I practice, I'm able to direct all my attention to working out."

Apparently, my older brother requires a lot of energy to plaster an idol-worthy smile on his face. But what's the logic in not putting effort into one small thing so you can put more effort into something even harder? My head is filled with biting remarks, but I don't have the energy to voice any of them.

"Excuse me! Your backup dancers are here." At our manager's words, I remember that today we have a meeting with our backup dancers in order to get ready for the concerts we'll be putting on this autumn. We don't usually practice with them.

We quickly greet them before getting right into our lessons.

Since we're idols that belong to the major talent agency Shineez, most people are really courteous around us. I feel like we're barely famous, but the CEO of our agency has told me we're a lot more popular than we think.

"You okay?"

"Yeah. I just can't handle this heat." My brother must have been worried seeing me deep in thought, so I flash him a smile.

We are idols.

We are Alpha, the greatest idols of all time.

We have to become stars that others can only dream about.

"Hey, do you like to dance?"

"Huh?" I'm surprised by a question from one of our backup dancers during a short break.

That dancer really stood out. I didn't start learning how to dance until I became an idol with my brother, but even to my untrained eye, this guy's talent made him shine brighter than the others. He had sunkissed skin and wavy black hair and stared at me with gleaming eyes.

"I asked if you like it. You look like you're suffering."

"Uh… because it's… hot?" I tilt my head, and the guy in front of me bursts out laughing.

"Why did you say that like it's a question? You're so weird."

Immediately, the backup dancer's friends grab at his clothes, looking flustered.

"H-Hey!"

"What?"

"Don't you remember that we were told not to talk to Alpha before we came here?!"

"Oh, were we?" The other dancers start to drag the man away, but before they can, I call out to him.

"Hey, my name's Yoichi."

"Pfft! I know. You're part of Alpha, after all."

"Oh, right."

I forgot.

I'm a famous idol.

"I'm Shiju. It's nice to meet ya." His gleaming eyes sparkle with a grin that takes over his entire face.

Thinking back, that meeting might have been the start of everything.

Our concerts were all successes, and my brother and I started to plan a nationwide tour despite being the first ever idol group

to have one decided so quickly after debuting. Everything was going well, but I felt panicked.

I hadn't been able to get Shiju's concerned words out of my head since that summer.

"Hey, do you like to dance?"

I always aimed for perfection. As an idol, as a person, as the sibling who supported his older brother… but in doing so, I could feel my sense of enjoyment leave everything I did. Before, I had pushed myself to go faster to make up for my youth and inexperience, but those words had me slowing my steps.

"What're you doing, Yoichi?"

"...Shiju?"

"Hey. Long time no see."

After my older brother collapsed and was hospitalized for fatigue, no one had been brave enough to talk to me, leaving me to attend a recording for a TV show by myself. Shiju didn't seem to notice how the others were tiptoeing around me— or rather, he didn't seem to care— and that was perhaps what made him so special.

"Is your brother okay?"

"Yeah. Thanks for asking."

Actually, my brother had a girlfriend. They were eager to finally have time together and were flirting in my brother's hospital

room, but I couldn't exactly say that, so I answered curtly and asked why Shiju was here.

"I'm about to perform in the final round for a national dance battle."

"Huh? Should you really be talking with me then?"

"I have three hours until I'm on, and it's not like I can prepare any more than I already have."

"You're not going to practice up until the last minute? If it were me, I'd want to perfect things so I didn't make a single mistake…"

"Dummy, it'd be boring to have to think about stuff like that while dancing."

"Boring?"

"I'm not saying it's wrong to want to be perfect. But I'm worried about you. That's all I have to say, but I'm pretty sure your fans would agree with me."

I felt like I finally understood the thing that had been buzzing around at the back of my mind.

Oh, I get it.

"...I've always wanted to hurry up and become a perfect adult."

"What? There's no such thing."

"Heh, that's true."

Yeah. We can shine even if we're incomplete. I think I want to

start enjoying myself more.

"You okay?"

"Yeah, thanks. I feel like that really helped. If you ever need a hand in the future, it'll be my turn to help you, Shiju."

"Pfft, like that would ever happen."

I didn't think I'd mind helping, being helped, or turning into an imperfect adult if I were with Shiju. I was willing to bet we would shine bright together, forever.

YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO BREATHE WITHOUT ME.

I'LL LOVE YOU SO MUCH THAT...

STAAAAARE

HMPH. IT'S NO USE PLAYING DUMB, YOU KNOW.

N-N-NOT REALLY! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

FWAP

WAH!

YOU REALLY LIKE THAT, HUH?

FLINCH

URGH...

I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT.

THAT'S THE CLIP OF MIROKU WE USED IN THE GAME, RIGHT?

ぽん PAT

YOU SAY THAT, BUT YOU'RE PROBABLY JUST JEALOU-

IT'S SUCH A SHAME NOT TO SHARE IT WITH THE WORLD. LET'S POST IT ONLINE!

!!

MIROKU?

TAPIOCA.

ABSOLUTELY NOT! THAT VIDEO IS TOO DANGEROUS!

#24

SQUEEZE

GRAB

SORRY...

BUT FUMI IS *MINE* (AKA *MY* MANAGER).

SO DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO HER.

TUG

FLUSTER

M—

MIROKU?!

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

WHAT WERE YOU TWO TALKING ABOUT?

OH!

UM, THAT IS...

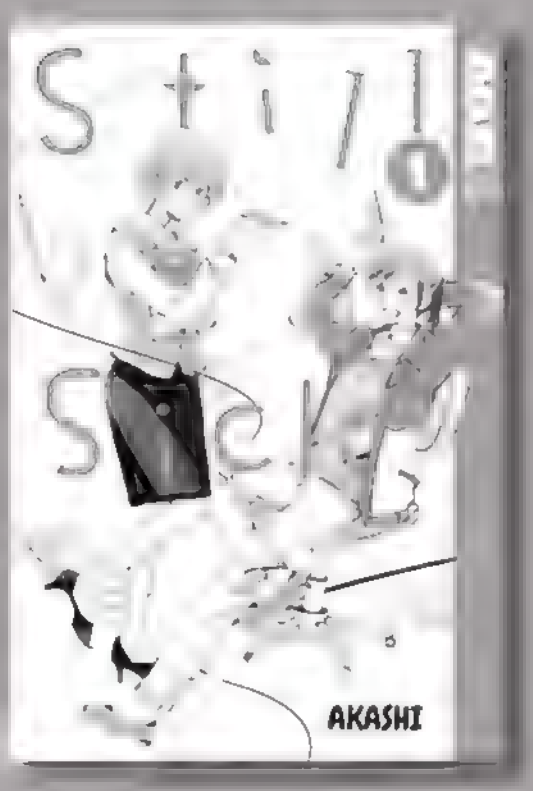
ゴニョ

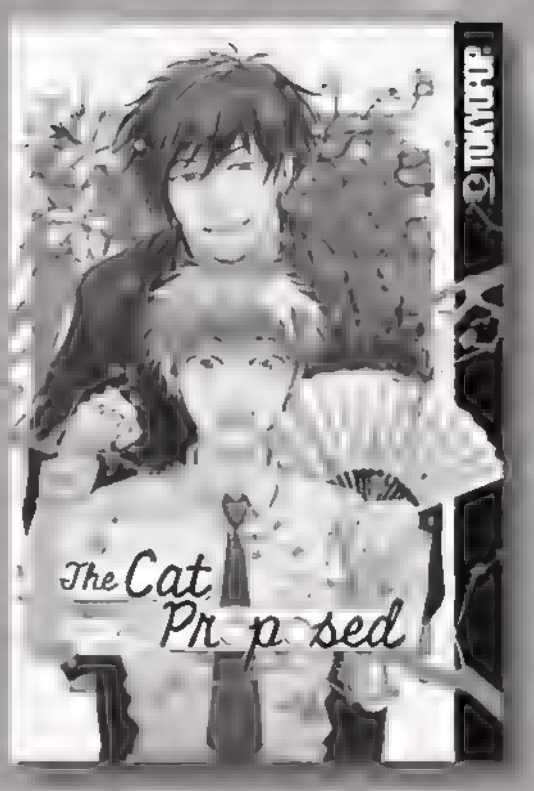
MUMBLE

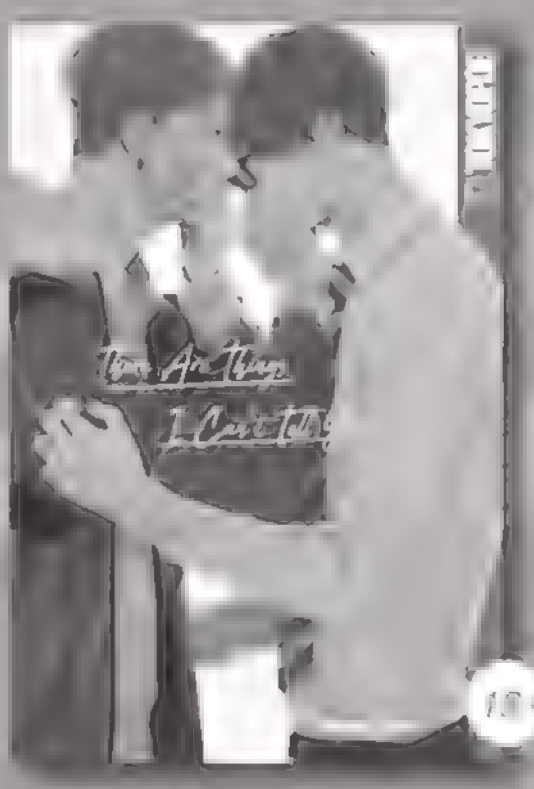
ゴニョ

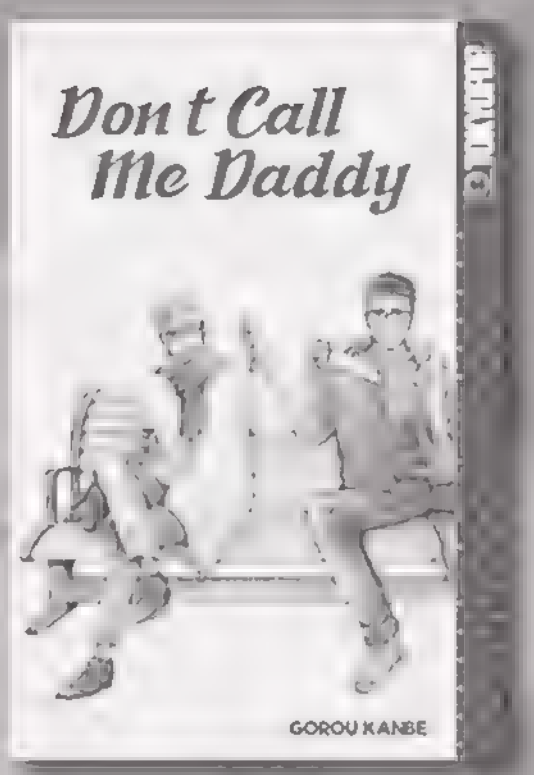
MUMBLE

I THINK THE 3D VERSION IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE 2D ONE...









Check out *LOVExLOVE.info* for all ki

LOVE x LOVE

TOKYOPOP®

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MAME COORDINATE, VOLUME 1

Sachi Miyabe

SLICE OF LIFE

She loves meat and fried foods, and eats only karaage bento. Wearing exclusively clothes with weird characters printed on them, her fashion sense is practically non-existent. No confidence in her own looks. Extreme social anxiety. She speaks with a country drawl, and even her name is unusual. But then Mame (born in Tottori prefecture) was discovered by an intimidating, bespectacled rookie manager, and now begins the arduous task of getting her ready for auditions! The road to Top Model looks awfully steep from here.

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© SACHI MIYABE 2016 / Tokuma Shoten

ALICE IN KYOTO FOREST, VOLUME 1

Mai Mochizuki, Haruki Niwa

SLICE OF LIFE FANTASY

TOKYOPOP

Orphaned at a young age, Alice has lived with her aunt for most of her childhood. But her uncle is abusive and resentful, and at fifteen years old, Alice decides to return home to Kyoto and train as a maiko, eventually hoping to become a geisha. But when she arrives back to the city where she was born, she finds that Kyoto has changed quite a bit in the eight years since she left it. Almost as if it's a completely different world...

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LAUGHING UNDER THE CLOUDS, VOLUME 3

KarakaraKemuri

ACTION FANTASY

Soramaru's quest to grow stronger brings him to the leader of the Yamainu, Abe no Sousei. Sousei proposes a trade: training in exchange for information. In search of the information required, Soramaru disguises himself and — with the help of youngest brother Chutaro — infiltrates the very prison he's taken so many criminals to: Gokumonjo. But nothing is ever as easy as it seems, and although Soramaru finds the information he needs to make a deal, the eldest Kumo brother Tenka suddenly finds himself under arrest and in dire straits...

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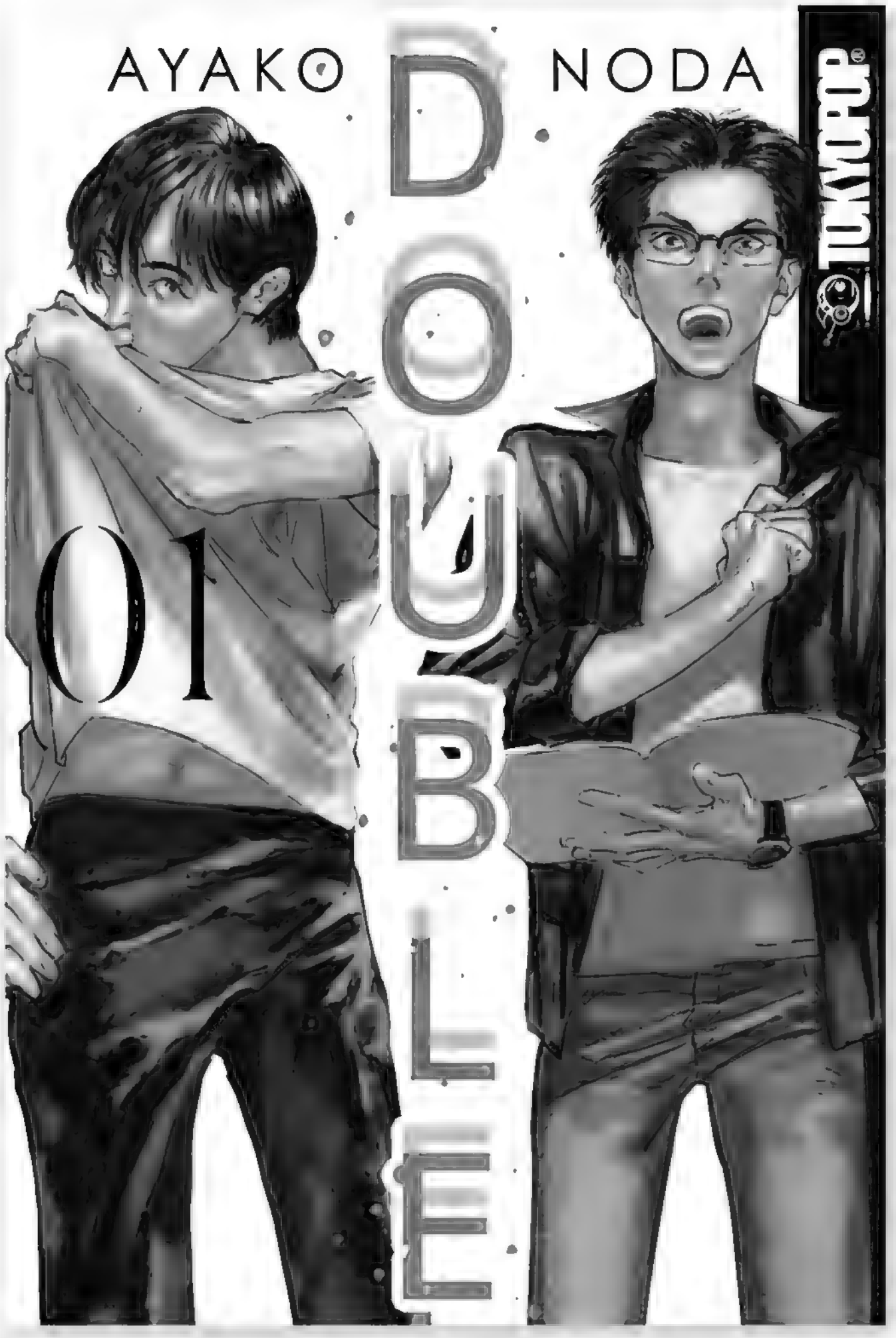
DOUBLE, VOLUME 1

Ayako Noda



DRAMA

Scatterbrained Takara Takarada is an undiscovered genius actor who fully embodies every character he's cast as, delivering unforgettable performance after performance onstage. But this genius can only be brought forth by his best friend and fellow actor, Yuujin Kamoshima, who cares for Takara even as he envies him for his innate talent. When it takes the two of them together to bring a character to life, what will happen when Takara is scouted away from their small-time theater troupe and thrust into the new world of television instead?

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A GENTLE NOBLE'S VACATION RECOMMENDATION, VOLUME 4

Misaki, Momochi & Sando

ISEKAI FANTASY

Lizel and Gil finally flush out their mysterious attacker and settle the score with him... but it seems the assailant isn't quite the threat they initially believed him to be. Is it possible this former foe could actually be a new ally? Maybe so... but first he'll have to convince them to give him the chance he knows he deserves!

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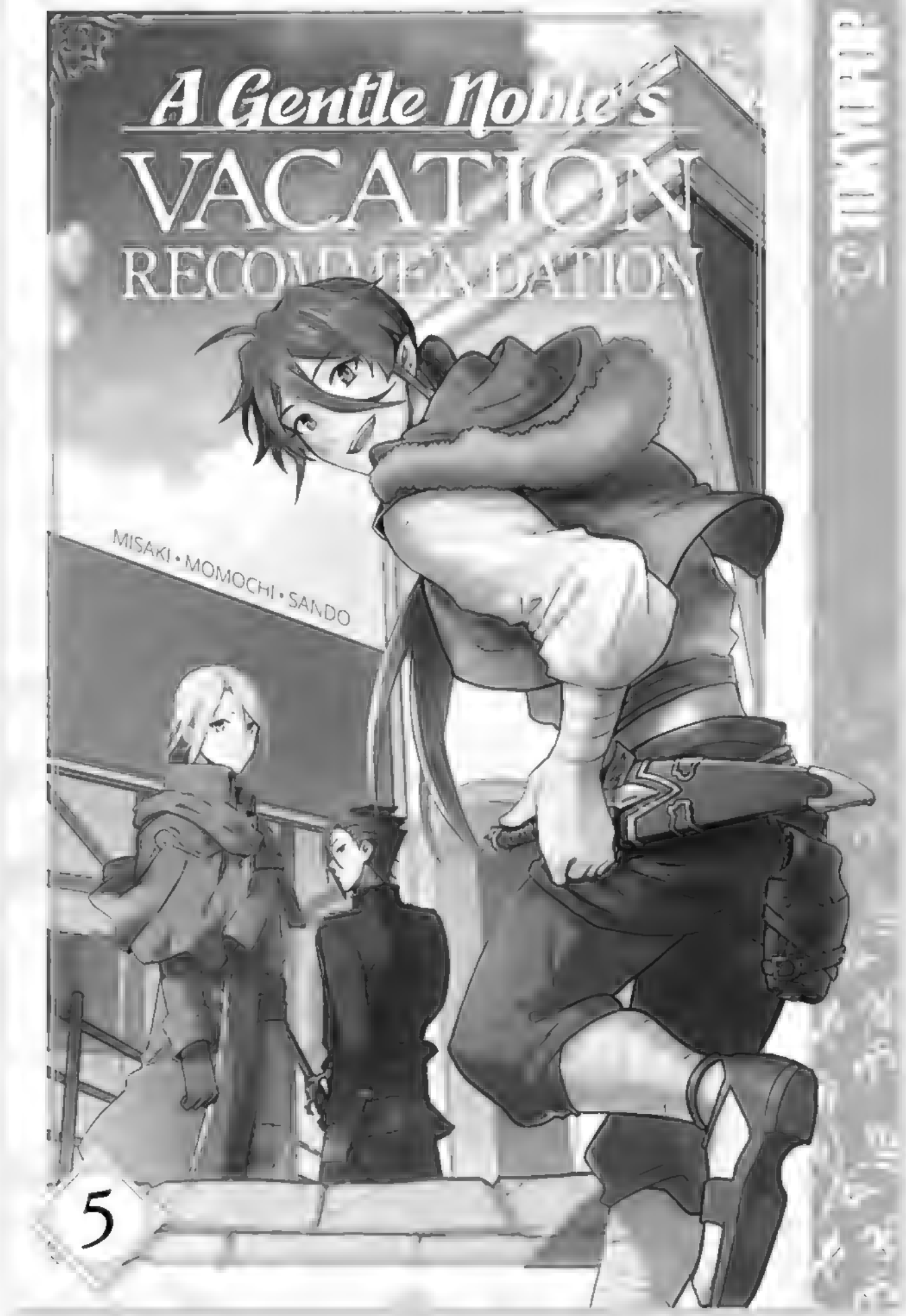
A GENTLE NOBLE'S VACATION RECOMMENDATION, VOLUME 5

Misaki, Momochi & Sando



ISEKAI FANTASY

TOKYOPOP

Lizel's adventuring party grows by one! With thieves on the prowl and questionable characters skulking about in the night, Lizel and Gil finally come to an agreement with Eleven. Little by little, they begin to accept him as he is... and although there are some who might disagree, can anyone ever say no to Lizel when he sets his mind to something?

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OUR NOT-SO-LONELY PLANET TRAVEL GUIDE, VOLUME 1

Mone Sorai

LOVE-x-LOVE

After quitting his job, Asahi tells his boyfriend Mitsuki that he'll marry him if they go on a trip around the world together first. Though Asahi's cautious nature often clashes with Mitsuki's carefree ways, the two grow steadily closer as they sightsee and eat their way through the first three countries on their world tour: Thailand, India, and Georgia. The people they meet and places they see will forever change their lives.

TOKYOPOP

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OUR NOT-SO-LONELY PLANET TRAVEL GUIDE, VOLUME 2

Mone Sorai

ŏLOVE-x-LOVEŏ

Super-serious Asahi Suzumura and easygoing Mitsuki Sayama may seem like an odd couple, but they made a deal — they'll vacation together around the world, and when they return to Japan, they'll get married. Even though they're far from home, each new destination is an opportunity to become closer to each other.

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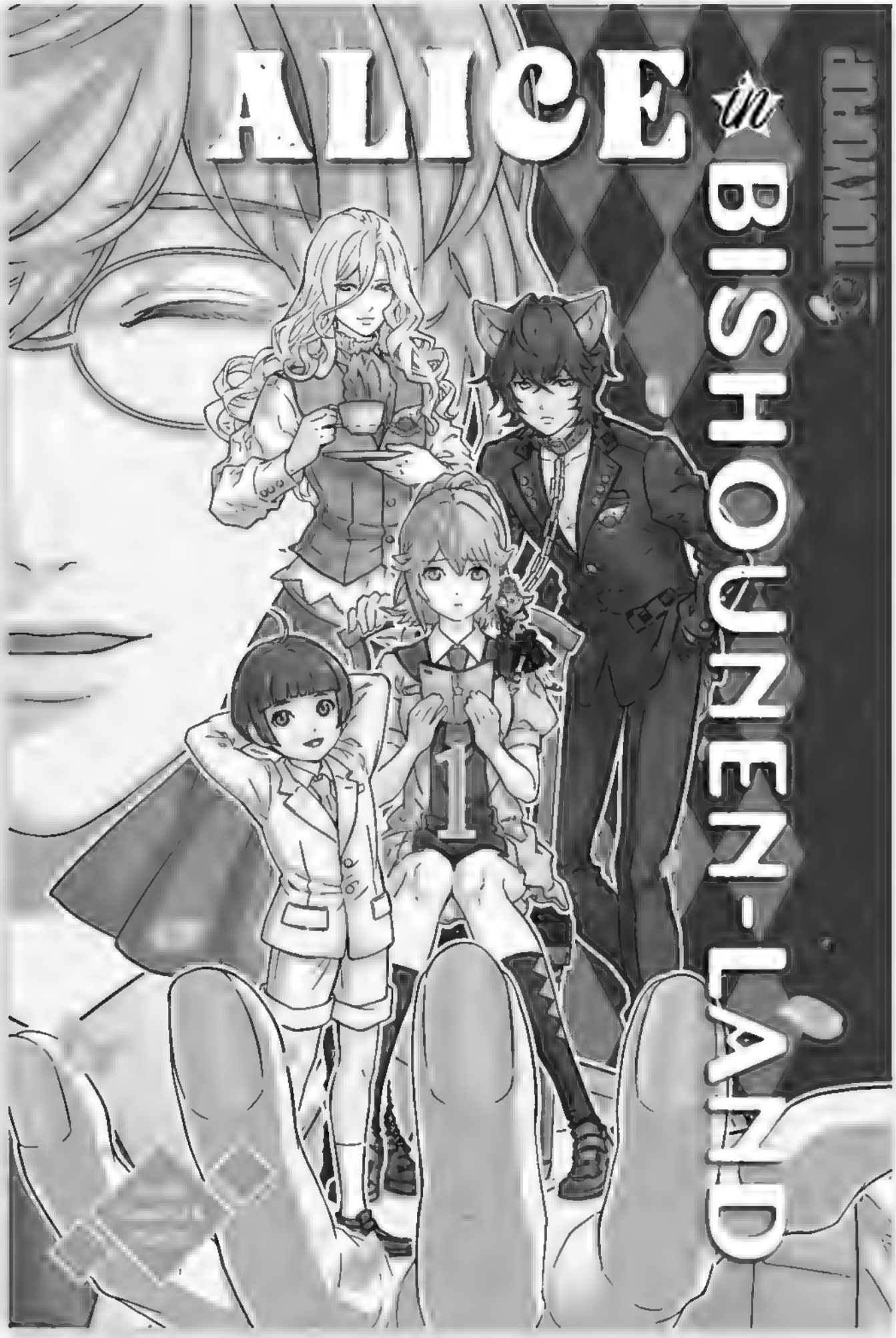
ALICE IN BISHOUNEN-LAND, VOLUME 1

Yushi Kawata, Yukito



COMEDY

Alice Kagami is an ordinary high school girl who doesn't really get her friend Tamami's obsession with idol games. There's more to life than handsome digital boys, dating sims, and mini-games, right? But then, Tamami is "chosen" as one of the top idol fangirls in the country and gets drawn into the game — and hapless Alice gets pulled in too! Between dealing with the mismatched members of her idol group to intense pressure to spend real money on gachas, how is a total idol game newbie supposed to take them to the top?

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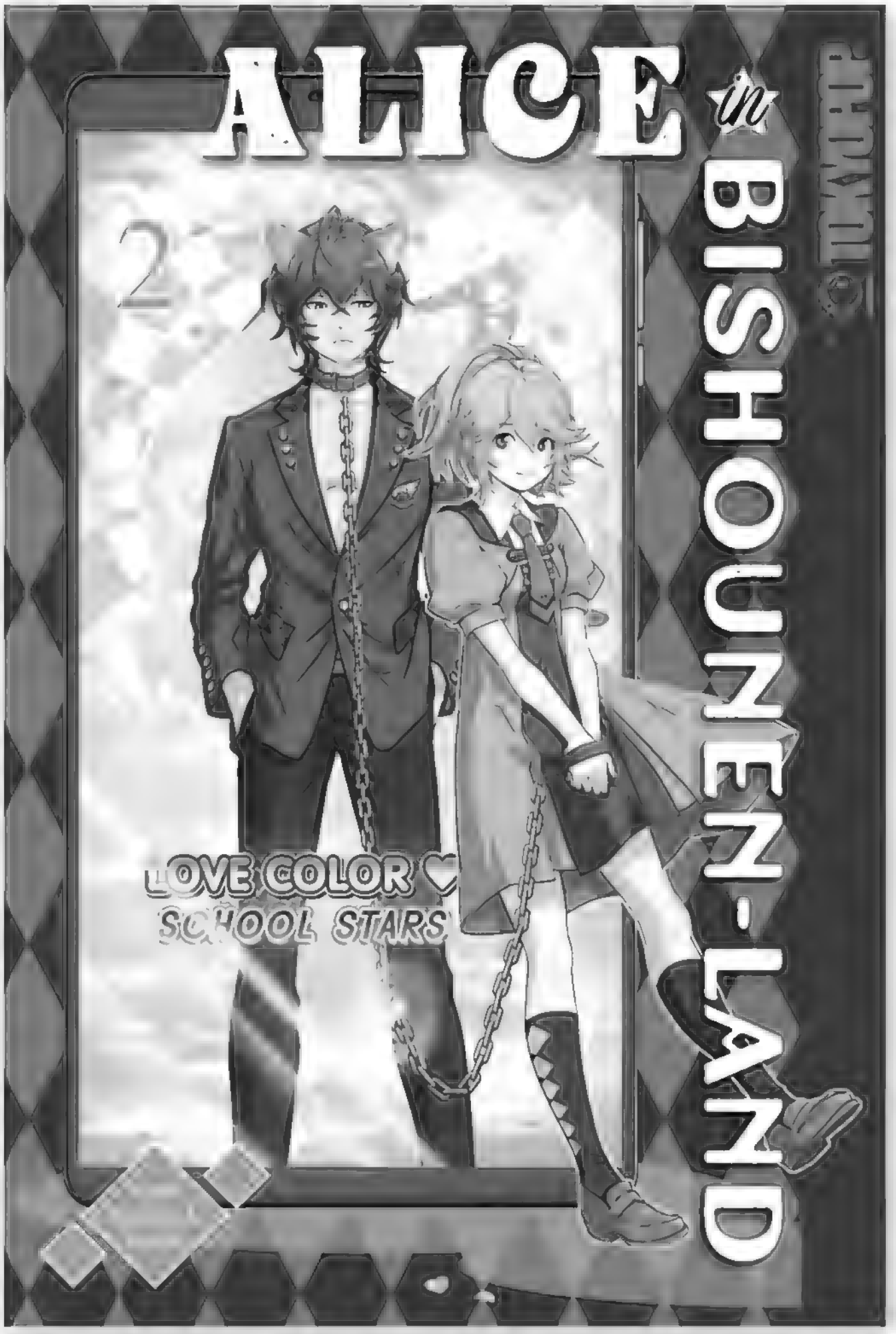
TOKYOPOP

ALICE IN BISHOUNEN-LAND, VOLUME 2

Yushi Kawata, Yukito



COMEDY

TOKYOPOP

After getting unexpectedly drawn into an idol dating sim, total newbie Alice Kagami doesn't have a clue how she's supposed to act like a proper producer, let alone save herself and her idol-obsessed friend Tamami. Together with her mismatched group of handsome boys, Alice learns to brave the gacha, level up her idols, and join in summer festival fun. But will their group's newfound success transform digital dreams into reality? Includes excerpts from artist Yukito on the design and production process of the elegant FIORE Rose plastic model by popular kit-and-doll-making company VOLKS!

STILL SICK, VOLUME 1

Akashi

♀LOVE-x-LOVE♀

Makoto Shimizu is just an ordinary office worker, blending in seamlessly with her colleagues on the job... That is, until her coworker Akane Maekawa discovers her well-hidden secret: in her spare time, she draws and sells girls' love comics! Akane is the last person Makoto would think of as a nerd, but as the two grow closer, it starts to seem like Akane may have a secret of her own...

TOKYOPOP

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STILL SICK, VOLUME 2

Akashi

♀LOVE-x-LOVE♀

TOKYOPOP

After finding out that her coworker Akane used to be a manga creator, Makoto encourages her new friend to recapture that dream. As an amateur comic artist herself, Makoto looks up to Akane and tries to help her overcome the difficulties that made her give up that profession in the past. Although Akane is often her own worst critic, Makoto inspires her to try reshaping her attitude toward her art. But matters become more complicated when Makoto realizes that, somewhere along the way, what started out as a professional friendship over a common interest has developed into... a serious crush!

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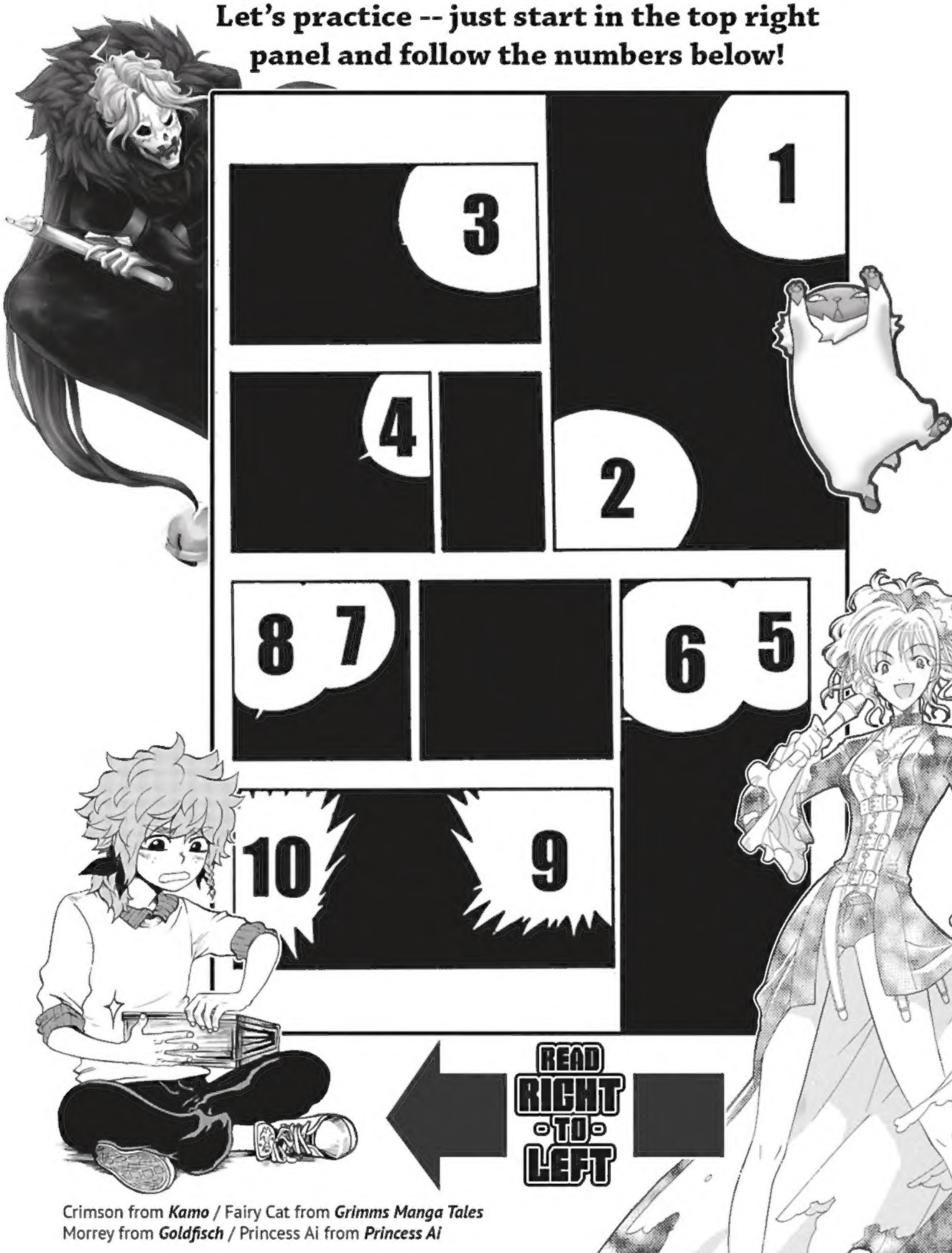
STOP

THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

How do you read manga-style? It's simple! Let's practice -- just start in the top right panel and follow the numbers below!



Crimson from ***Kamo*** / Fairy Cat from ***Grimms Manga Tales***
Morrey from ***Goldfisch*** / Princess Ai from ***Princess Ai***